

**A DANGEROUS WORLD:
STEPHEN HARPER'S POST-MAIDAN UKRAINE POLICY**

A Thesis Submitted to the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the Department
of Political Studies

University of Saskatchewan
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Abstract

The thesis puts forward a neoclassical realist theory of the Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis, which draws upon a number of theories, including Power Transition theory, to examine the determinative role played by variables at the system-, unit-, and individual-levels of analysis. The Ukrainian crisis was enmeshed in a broader struggle between state actors with different and competing visions of world order – highlighting the importance of system-level incentives and constraints. The Harper government's response to the crisis nonetheless reflected Mr. Harper's ideas and vision of world order, which differed substantially from his predecessors. Amidst the most serious geopolitical crisis of the post-Cold War era, these ideational differences conditioned the shape and direction of Canada's response in important ways, affecting the Harper government's response with an unusual degree of robustness and urgency. Individual-level variables including ideology are of particular importance to understanding the shape and direction of the Harper government's response. Nevertheless, Mr. Harper's worldview did not emerge in a vacuum. Unit-level variables including elite culture played a critical role in shaping Mr. Harper's threat assessments and strategic preferences – which were reflective of his worldview. Thus, as the thesis will demonstrate, the Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis was shaped by determinants at all three levels of analysis.

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Dedication

To my brother Ryan, whose commitment to family and service to country I greatly admire
and respect.

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Chapter 1: Neoclassical Realism and Canadian Foreign Policy

1.1 Introduction

Since Ukraine's independence in 1991, Canada and Ukraine have enjoyed a 'Special Relationship' whereby successive Canadian governments have provided exceptional levels of support and assistance to the newly independent state.¹ In 2014-15, the government of Stephen Harper, sustained by all-party support for Ukraine in Canada's parliament, lent its robust assistance to the new pro-Western Ukrainian government as it faced the monumental challenge of resisting Russian aggression. The Harper government, however, went further than the opposition parties desired. The government's policy was framed in unusually unambiguous and ideologically charged terms. The question is why? Conventional wisdom has it that the Harper government interpreted Canada's role in the world differently from its predecessors.² But how do we account for this more pronounced divergence in posture and rhetoric? Were Mr. Harper's convictions instrumental in shaping his government's thinking and position on the crisis? And to what extent did Mr. Harper's worldview contribute to the decision that Canada should take a principled stand against Russian aggression?

Answering in the affirmative, our explanation would assume the importance of ideas and leadership in the making of policy while also emphasizing the role of agency as a determinant of Canada's post-Maidan Ukraine policy. From this perspective, Mr. Harper's assessment of the international threat environment was to some degree shaped by his hardnosed but ultimately liberal worldview. The Harper government's ideologically tinged threat assessment, in turn, had an impact on the form of his government's policy response. Thus, Mr. Harper's beliefs and individual agency appear to have played a critical role in creating the sense of urgency and fervor

¹ Bohdan S. Kordan, "Between Friends: Canada-Ukraine Relations from Independence to the Euromaidan," (forthcoming).

² Adam Chapnick, "A diplomatic counter-revolution: Conservative foreign policy, 2006-11," *International Journal* 67, no. 1 (December 2012): 137-54.

that animated the Harper government's position. Other Western leaders clearly viewed Russia's aggression as a serious threat to international peace and stability. There was outspokenness to Mr. Harper's pronouncements, however, that both set him apart from his peers and certainly contrasted with the quieter and more constrained approach of his immediate predecessors. Translated into policy, we would describe the government's position as less compromising, more ideological, and unambiguous in nature. Why?

While Mr. Harper could have pursued a quiet and constrained response in keeping with the tradition of moderate Canadian foreign policy tradition, he did not. Aspects of his position seem to have been profoundly shaped by moral imperative, the duty to do what was right. Others have suggested that Mr. Harper is driven by a determination to do right, and possesses a keen sense of moral clarity.³ Moral clarity is a form of situational awareness that allows an individual to intuit right from wrong, and thus perceive and respond to moral imperatives. In contrast to the tame rhetoric that would have accompanied a more politically expedient course of action, Mr. Harper characterized the crisis by using ideologically charged language. Given the perceived stakes, moral and otherwise, Mr. Harper signaled his intention to position Canada on the right side of history in as unambiguous a manner as possible. From this perspective, Mr. Harper's values and leadership account for the shift away from the quiet and more restrained approach to foreign policy associated with previous governments.

But how important is the question of leadership? Scholars acknowledge that the determinants of foreign policy are complex and manifold. But what role does individual agency play, especially in relation to other factors? Kenneth Waltz identifies three separate levels of analysis that loosely correspond to contextual factors that shape the political environment, or as he terms them, 'images' – the individual, the state, and the international system.⁴ Embracing a view that emphasizes the primacy of the second and third images, Waltz nevertheless claims that to understand the foreign policy of states "...no single image is ever adequate."⁵ As theorists associated with the neoclassical school of realism contend, variables at each level of analysis

³ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development, "Address by Minister Baird to the NATO Council of Canada Conference – Ukraine: The Future of International Norms," (Ottawa: DFATD, November 18, 2014), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

⁴ Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*. New York: Columbia U P (2001): 238.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 225.

shape the direction and form of a state's foreign policy.⁶ Neoclassical realist theories assign factors at the state- and individual levels the rank of intervening unit-level variables while maintaining the causal primacy of variables at the system level of analysis. Waltz' first image – the individual – has particular value in understanding how factors such as ideology shaped the Harper government's post-Maidan Ukraine policy.

Leaders make decisions with the actions and reactions of the other states in mind. They must contend with system-level incentives and constraints. The competitive nature of international relations imparts a rhythm and logic that exists independently of individual will. In this regard, the Harper government responded to the serious and escalating crisis that threatened international security and Canada's interest in global stability. To the extent that the government's threat assessment was premised on a conventional understanding of Canadian interest in system stability, the general direction of Canada's response was predictable and the degree of parliamentary support not entirely unexpected. But this fails to explain the 'fervency gap' – Mr. Harper's remarkably robust and uncompromising position, which set it apart from both the opposition parties, as well as from previous governments, whether Liberal or Conservative. Individual- and unit-level variables, including Mr. Harper's ideology and individual agency as a foreign policy executive (hereafter FPE) shaped Canada's response to the Ukrainian crisis in important ways.⁷ The FPE's perception of the crisis is of importance here, as Mr. Harper's ideologically shaded threat assessment is directly linked to the government's extraordinary and unambiguous position of support for Ukraine in its moment of need.

1.2 Research objectives

An objective of the thesis is to identify the core determinants that shaped Canada's policy toward Ukraine in the wake of Russia's de facto annexation of Crimea and hybrid war in Ukraine's eastern territories. Of special interest, however, are the role of ideology and individual agency as variables that shaped the direction of the Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis. This case study is primarily concerned with discovering the source of the Harper government's exceptional degree of robustness and zeal in the formulation and execution of its

⁶ Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*. (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2009), 7.

⁷ Unit-level variables help to account for the changes to Canadian foreign policy that can be observed between governments, as well as differences between Canada's response to system-level imperatives compared to those of similarly positioned states.

post-Maidan Ukraine policy. In one sense, the Harper government's policy position did not appear to deviate significantly from previous governments, which shared Mr. Harper's view of a stable international order as a core Canadian interest. Where the government did differ was in the unambiguous tenor of its messaging, and the robustness of its support for the US-led coalition's response to the crisis. These qualities suggest a possible substantive difference. But how do we account for these differences between the Harper government's policies and those of past governments? What distinguishes the Harper government's Ukraine policy? Can the differences described above be explained in part at the unit- and/or individual-levels of analysis?

By answering these questions, this study aims to explain why the Harper government's post-Maidan Ukraine policy appears to diverge so sharply from Canada's traditional foreign policy practice during the post-Cold War era, a tradition that leans toward moderation, incrementalism, and cautious discipline. This thesis will seek to explain the root causes of this divergence and explore its nature and meaning. At a certain level, the divergence appears to represent more of a circumstantial course correction within Canada's foreign policy tradition than a true departure. The new course that Mr. Harper ultimately charted is rooted in that government's ideologically tinged threat assessments and policy preferences, as well as Mr. Harper's waning confidence in the stability of the liberal international order. Mr. Harper was operating under the assumption that the international order was in crisis, whereas his post-Cold War predecessors planned and executed their foreign policies during periods of relative stability. Understanding how Mr. Harper perceived the crisis is crucial to understanding the nature of the shift that occurred in Canadian foreign policy amidst the events in Ukraine, including toward a renewed and more robust engagement with NATO. By recognizing Mr. Harper's role in moving Canada towards a more proactive approach to the urgent task of system defense, an appreciation of the varied nature of Canadian foreign policy is obtained and the role and importance of individual decision makers in foreign policy clarified.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

Neoclassical realist theories of foreign policy seek to explain specific decisions of states with reference to causal variables at the system level of analysis, and intervening variables at the

unit- and individual-levels of analysis.⁸ Neoclassical realist theories assign causal primacy to systemic variables, as FPEs must devise their foreign policies in response to systemic incentives and constraints. As Steven E. Lobell suggests, any FPE who neglects to consider systemic incentives and constraints will jeopardize the survival of their state over the long run.⁹ Systemic factors thus provide the impetus and direction for a state's foreign policy. Unit- and individual-level variables are assigned an intervening role, meaning they condition an FPE's response to systemic incentives and constraints.¹⁰ The primary strength of adopting a neoclassical realist approach for the case at hand is that it allows for a rich, granular analysis that takes into account a wide variety of variables. Nonetheless, this thesis does not provide a complete accounting of the role played by every single variable. A book-length treatment would be required to achieve a more in-depth analysis of certain variables. These would include the role that economic considerations played in shaping the Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis. Due to limitations of space, such considerations are only explored briefly and in relation to other factors that appeared more significant. A more complete accounting of the determinants of the Harper government's Ukraine policy thus requires the attention of other scholars examining questions related to their specialized areas of study.

This thesis provides the first in-depth scholarly analysis of the Harper government's post-Maidan Ukraine policy.¹¹ Despite its limitations, this study provides a timely appraisal of the early stages of Canada's response to the crisis in Ukraine. As of the moment of writing, this crisis is still ongoing. The neoclassical realist theory put forward in this thesis identifies the key factors at each level of analysis influencing the direction and form of the Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis. The theory will point to the system-, unit-, and individual-level factors

⁸ Steven E. Lobell, "Threat Assessments, the state, and foreign policy: a neoclassical realist model," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, ed. Norrin M. Ripsman and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 43.

⁹ Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, p 7.

¹⁰ It should be noted that incentives and constraints exist at both the system- and unit-levels of analysis. Leaders are forced to contend with incentives and constraints at both levels. For this reason neoclassical realists suggest that foreign policy executives engage in what is termed a 'two-level game.' The nature and influence of variables at both levels of analysis is described and assessed in greater detail in subsequent chapters. For a useful discussion of foreign policy executives and 'two-level games', see Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realism*, 7.

¹¹ Other shorter works related to the subject include Aya Fujiwara, "Canada's Response to Euromaidan," in *Ukraine's Euromaidan: Analyses of a Civil Revolution*, ed. David R. Marples and ed. Frederick V. Mills, (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2015), 199-237; and Chapter 4 in Bohdan S. Kordan, "Between Friends: Canada-Ukraine Relations from Independence to the Euromaidan," (forthcoming).

that conditioned the shape and direction of this response.¹² The unusual shape and direction of the Harper government's policies appears to be driven by the influence of certain individual- and unit-level variables – an important theoretical dimension that flows directly from a neoclassical realist analytical framework. To conduct an analysis at these levels, attention will focus on the incentives and constraints at the system- and unit-levels of analysis, as well as unit- and individual-level variables. These include the ideas of Conservative Party elites, as well as Mr. Harper's ideology, worldview, and individual agency as an FPE. Each of these factors will be assessed, explaining Canada's response to the most serious geopolitical crisis since the end of the Cold War.

1.4 Methodology

In keeping with a neoclassical realist framework, the determinants of the Harper government's Ukraine policy will be explored and assessed. The goals and limits of Canadian foreign policy will be discussed in the context of the foreign policy literature, paying close attention to those determinants that help shape foreign policy and how these frame our understanding of system-level dynamics. Insights drawn from Power Transition theory will inform both the discussion of Canada's interests, and of system-level dynamics. Of interest as well is how variables at the unit- and individual-levels of analysis tend to inform influence FPE behavior. As neoclassical realist theories contend, incentives and constraints at the unit- and individual-levels of analysis condition the shape and direction of policy responses to system-level incentives and constraints. The Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis will be assessed in relation to the foreign policies of previous governments, which did not share the Harper government's distinctly conservative value-system or strategic preferences. This discussion will draw upon aspects of Liberal Internationalist theory to explain the differences

¹² System-level variables include the incentive states have towards maintaining international order, as well as the constraints imposed on them by the structure of the existing international system. To briefly illustrate this point, it is useful to consider the relationship between systemic incentives and constraints. While Canada has a strong interest in preserving international order, Canada lacks the power to achieve this end on its own. Indeed, maintaining order requires that a number of actors engage in pragmatic cooperation. Such cooperation typically occurs within the confines of multilateral organizations like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations. Yet membership in these multilateral organizations imposes significant constraints on state behavior. Members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with certain rules and norms. The expectations that follow from membership thus tend to play an important role in shaping the parameters of a state's foreign policy.

between the Harper government and its predecessors, as well as the process that produced this change.

Of interest here are the ways in which the Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis tended to reflect Mr. Harper's ideology and worldview. Variables at the individual-level of analysis, including the ideas, principles and understandings associated with Mr. Harper's worldview shaped his perceptions of the crisis, as well as his strategic preferences. His candid public declarations suggest an ideologically tinged perception of the crisis. The rhetoric itself will be examined and assessed with a view to helping to understand the Harper government's view of both the crisis and Canada's proper role in the world. Neoclassical realist theories of foreign policy assume that several individual-level variables related to a FPE's perception (including ideology) shape foreign policy responses to system-level incentives and constraints.¹³ Variables at the unit-level of analysis may be of use in building an understanding of the Harper government's robust and unambiguous response to the Ukrainian crisis.

It is possible that Mr. Harper's decision to share his unvarnished assessment of the stakes during the Ukraine crisis reflected his desire to generate 'political heat' by mobilizing public opinion in support of his government's Ukraine policy.¹⁴ While Canadian FPEs enjoy a significant amount of autonomy, Canada is a middling power with limited resources and influence. For Canada to punch above its weight in international relations requires a concerted effort at mobilizing the state and societal actors in support of foreign policy objectives. Mr. Harper, as an FPE, was necessarily involved in the planning and execution of his government's foreign policy at every stage – including the stage at which the government sought to mobilize public support. While mobilization requirements are no doubt an important variable to consider, it still must be assessed in relation to other factors. To reduce Mr. Harper's rhetoric to purely instrumental political behavior risks underestimating the importance of his ideology and worldview as foreign policy determinants. Thus, the Harper government's loud and robust response to the Ukrainian crisis can be explained with reference to variables at both the individual- and unit-levels of analysis. These include Mr. Harper's ideology, the strategic

¹³ For a useful discussion of how individual-level variables condition the shape and direction of foreign policies, see Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 107-46.

¹⁴ For a discussion of how states have used ideology as a tool to mobilize the state and societal actors in support of a state's foreign policy objectives, see Randall Schweller, "Neoclassical Realism and State Mobilization: Expansionist Ideology in the Age of Mass Politics," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, ed. Steven E. Lobell et al. *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2009), 230.

benefits of mobilizing civil society behind the government's policies, and the Conservative party's values and distinct strategic preferences.

In assessing the relative importance of these variables, it is important to acknowledge that the bedrock ideological content of Mr. Harper's rhetoric throughout the crisis appears consistent with his worldview prior to Russia's aggression. Mr. Harper's rhetoric does not have the appearance of being contrived purely for partisan political ends, or simply for the purpose of mobilizing state and society in support of his foreign policy objectives. Rather, Mr. Harper's rhetoric seemed to represent an unguarded, albeit ideologically tinged threat assessment. A cursory examination of Mr. Harper's rhetoric will support this contention.

The appearance of viable explanatory variables at multiple levels of analysis suggests that Mr. Harper's heightened rhetoric evades monocausal explanation. In keeping with neoclassical realist theories of foreign policy, the analysis will proceed under the assumption that Mr. Harper's declarations and actions were shaped by several variables at the individual-, state- and systemic-levels of analysis, while assuming the primacy of systemic variables. These variables must be assessed in relation to one another to understand how together these shaped the Harper government's response to the Ukraine crisis. Mr. Harper's rhetoric suggests an ideologically tinged view of the Ukrainian crisis. This can be explained with reference to both Mr. Harper's ideology and worldview, and the Conservative Party's unique strategic preferences, which were not shared by previous governments. Unit-level factors, including the significant absence of strong unit-level constraints, assist in explaining why the Harper government's response to the crisis was so unusually robust. There was, as well, Mr. Harper's interest in mobilizing domestic support, which assists in explaining both the substance and strident tone of Mr. Harper's rhetoric.

1.5 Thesis statement

The Harper government's response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine marked an important shift in the conduct of Canadian foreign relations. The Harper government's rhetoric reflected its ideologically tinged threat assessment of Russia and view of Canada's interests in the crisis. The Harper government's response was a significant departure from the quieter and more restrained foreign policies pursued by previous governments. This departure was both stylistic and substantive. The Harper response to the crisis was less ambiguous and more ideologically driven than the foreign policies of either Liberal or earlier Conservative governments. This

reflects, in part, the separate strategic culture of Conservative Party elites. As party leader and prime minister, Mr. Harper's ideology and worldview played a significant role in shaping this culture. This more conservative strategic culture shaped the Harper government's view of the crisis in important ways. The Harper government's ideologically tinged threat assessments and policy preferences contributed a sense of urgency and militancy to Canadian foreign policy. Thus, Mr. Harper's ideas and individual agency played a critical role in conditioning the overall shape and direction of Canada's response to the Ukrainian crisis.

Mr. Harper and his cabinet ministers repeatedly characterized Russia's aggression toward Ukraine as akin to Nazi Germany's invasion of Czechoslovakia and the Canadian reaction "... a response to Russia's expansionism and militarism."¹⁵ Mr. Harper further described Vladimir Putin as "...an extreme nationalist and...an imperialist."¹⁶ No other party leader employed such strong language. Mr. Harper's ideology and worldview shaped his assessment of how Russia's Ukraine policy threatened Canada, given its interests as a status-quo state of only moderate power and influence. What followed from this stark threat assessment was the near elimination of nuance from the government's foreign policy vocabulary. Moreover, the Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis was imbued with a sense of urgency and militancy.

System and state level variables fail to fully account for this fervency. The strength of Mr. Harper's desire to preserve the status quo of the international order sprung from his recognition of what system destabilization might entail for Canada. As a starting point, Mr. Harper understood that it was in Canada's interests to preserve and defend the existing international order. If that order were to destabilize or collapse it was unlikely that Canada would have had the same degree of influence in the shaping of the new order as it did the last. Liberal democracies such as Canada stood to lose if the liberal international order collapsed. This profoundly conservative assessment of Canada's interests as a status quo state is premised on a recognition that the values embedded in the existing liberal international order are more compatible with Canada's interests as a liberal democracy than if the system devolved into disorder or moved in a less liberal direction. It is important to consider that an FPE may assess threats, or conceive of the

¹⁵ Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, "STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA ANNOUNCING SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINE," (Ottawa: PMO, August 8, 2014). PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

¹⁶ Canadian Press, "Harper calls Putin 'extreme nationalist, imperialist,'" *The Toronto Star*, June 8, 2014, https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/06/08/harper_calls_putin_extreme_nationalist_imperialist.html.

national interest in a manner that is shaped by ideology.¹⁷ How an FPE perceives a threat will have some bearing on how he responds to it. In this case, Mr. Harper's remarks indicate that ideology shaped his threat assessment of Russia. The impact of factors such as ideology and strategic culture can be assessed at both the unit- and individual-levels of analysis. At both levels, these factors play a role in shaping the strategic preferences and threat assessments of political elites and, more importantly, the FPE. Of interest is the role of Stephen Harper as an FPE and moral agent.

To the extent that Mr. Harper's ideologically-tinged brand of moral universalism shaped his perception of the Canadian national interest, and conditioned his understanding of the threat posed by Russia's revisionist policies, it is a key variable to consider. Mr. Harper's moral universalism is, in this way, a singular determinant in Canada's foreign policy stance on the Ukraine crisis, highlighting the FPE's potential role as an important moral agent during periods of crisis. Mr. Harper's moral universalism affected an uncompromising and unequivocal tone to his rhetoric and shaped decisions so that they appeared inordinate. However, Mr. Harper's moral universalism did not so much resemble an absolute departure from Canada's liberal foreign policy tradition. Arguably, it was a course correction that responded to a change in international circumstances. The stability of the international order was less in doubt during the tenures of other post-Cold War prime ministers. No prime minister since Mr. Mulroney faced the same degree of uncertainty that Mr. Harper did in the days and months following Russia's aggression. Mr. Harper viewed Russia's military aggression against Ukraine as a threat to world order. Given the danger of the moment, his rhetoric naturally differed from his post-Cold War predecessors, who formulated their foreign policies during a period of relative geopolitical stability. Mr. Harper's responded by moving Canadian foreign policy in an even more 'liberal' direction. His blunt, yet ideologically-tinged threat assessments offer rare insight into how individual-level variables such as ideology might shape the foreign policy assessments and preferences of Canadian FPEs during periods of geopolitical instability.

1.6 Organization of the Thesis

Chapter 1 will introduce the problem, theoretical framework, methodology used, and conclude with the thesis statement. Chapter 2 will highlight Canada's interests as a Status Quo

¹⁷ Byman and Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men," 137-40.

Power, and articulate a general understanding of the goals and parameters of Canadian foreign policy, especially in the post-Cold War era. Using a neoclassical realist approach, the chapter will assess the role of key system-level variables that shaped Canada's Ukraine policy since 1991. The chapter will draw upon Power Transition theory and the Canadian foreign policy literature to develop an argument in support of the basic proposition that changes to the structure of the international order have played a determinative role in shaping Canada's engagement with Ukraine since the Mulroney period. The discussion in Chapter 2 will provide the theoretical framework for a subsequent discussion of the Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis. The questions that this chapter will address include: how have changes to the structure of the international system reshaped the way Canada has pursued its interests? To what degree have variables at the system-level of analysis factors Canada's foreign policy toward Ukraine since its independence?

Chapter 3 focuses on assessing the post-Maidan security dilemma, as well as the system-level incentives and constraints that shaped Canada's response to the crisis. This chapter will discuss the Harper government's understanding of the crisis, and how Russia's aggression against Ukraine threatens Canadian interests by way of system stability. An assessment of Mr. Harper's remarks and policy decisions will demonstrate that he viewed Russia's Ukraine policy as a threat to the post-Cold War international order. Moreover, these will demonstrate that Mr. Harper viewed Russia as responsible for the deepening security dilemma. The Harper government's Ukraine policy will be discussed in relation to Canadian threat perceptions and the role Canada played within the American-led effort to ensure the stability of the existing international order. Chapter 3 will address the following questions. To what extent did systemic incentives and constraints shape the Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis? What evidence supports the proposition that Mr. Harper viewed Russia's aggression against Ukraine as a threat to the stability of the post-Cold War international order? Is there a plausible system-level explanation for the Harper government's robust and unambiguous response to the crisis? What were the intended effects of this response, insofar as it relates to the stability of the international order? To what extent was the Canadian response optimal or suboptimal? What do the Harper government's pronouncements reveal about its threat assessments and policy preferences in the context of the crisis?

Chapter 4 will provide a detailed description of the Harper government's post-Maidan Ukraine policy and assess how unit-level incentives and constraints shaped the Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis. The primary unit-level variables of interest include: domestic political incentives and constraints, economic interests, and other factors that affected the Harper government's capacity to mobilize domestic support for its response to the crisis. Chapter 4 will address the following questions. Which unit-level incentives and constraints shaped the Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis? To what extent did these unit-level incentives and constraints condition the shape and direction of this response? How did they do so, and why?

Chapter 5 will extend the discussion to include an assessment of individual agency, ideology, and Conservative Party culture as determinants of the Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis. These variables conditioned the Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis, accounting for aspects of both the urgency and robustness of its policies. Here, Mr. Harper's worldview and value-system are of interest in explaining the shape and direction of the Harper government's response. This is especially so given the central role of Mr. Harper in the Conservative Party, and the degree to which he shaped its foreign policy consensus. This chapter will be organized around the following questions: What does Mr. Harper's rhetoric suggest about his ideology and worldview? To what extent did individual-level variables, including Mr. Harper's individual agency as an FPE, shape the Harper government's threat assessment and policy preferences? To what extent do variables at the individual-level of analysis explain the unusual robustness and urgency of this response? Chapter 6 will offer a synthesis of the ideas presented in the first five chapters, and summarize the overall conclusions of the case study.

Chapter 2: Canada's Interest in World Order and Ukraine

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to place the Canada-Ukraine relationship within the broader context of Canada's post-war international engagement. A neoclassical realist (hereafter NCR) account of the goals and parameters of Canadian foreign policy in the post-war era, which draws upon Power Transition theory to assess Canada's interests, is presented. Building on this foundation, Canada's interests in Ukraine and how it has pursued them is further discussed. The questions in this chapter include: what insights does a NCR theory of Canadian foreign policy provide in attempting to understand Canada's post-war interests? Has Canada's international behavior in this period served these interests? Which variables have had the greatest influence in shaping this behavior, and why? Finally, with regards to the Canada-Ukraine relationship: what are Canada's interests in Ukraine? Have Canada's policies of engagement toward Ukraine served these interests?

2.2 Understanding Canada's interests as a Status-Quo Power

2.2.1 The Status Quo and Revisionist Powers

Realist scholars have long differentiated between states, assigning them a 'type' based on their support for and opposition to the existing arrangement of the international order. From this perspective, states of differing types pursue different foreign policy objectives. This paradigm has featured prominently in recent theories of foreign policy associated with NCR.¹ However, such views are not associated exclusively with NCR. As Schweller argues, several scholars within the Realist tradition hold similar views.

Morgenthau called them imperialistic and status-quo powers; Schuman employed the terms satiated and unsatiated powers; Kissinger referred to revolutionary and status-quo states; Carr distinguished satisfied from dissatisfied Powers; ... Wolfers

¹ Several prominent neoclassical realists, including William Wohlforth and Randall Schweller, have differentiated between states in this manner in their writings.

referred to status quo and revisionist states; and Aron saw eternal opposition between the forces of revision and conservation.²

Schweller's theory of state-types differentiates between revisionist states and status quo states based on their attitudes and preferences towards an existing order, arguing for example that status quo states are security maximizers. These states seek to maintain control over their existing resources.³ From this perspective, some states support status quo arrangements because of the reasonable expectation that the absence of order would render more difficult, if not altogether futile, any effort to preserve control over its resources. Revisionist Powers (hereafter RPs), on the other hand, seek to overturn the status quo. They do so to increase their absolute power and gain a greater share of systemic resources. Such states desire more than what they already possess. From this perspective, power is not simply a means by which the RP obtains additional security. Rather, the accumulation of power is a means of attaining ends aside from security, including the attainment of wealth and prestige, or, territorial expansion. A state that pursues a policy of territorial aggrandizement, of course, may increase its power at the expense of its own security. That is the risk inherent in revision.⁴

Based upon the extent of a status quo or revisionist state's respective goals or ambition, one may further differentiate between Status Quo Powers (hereafter SQPs) and 'doggedly' SQPs, as well as between 'limited-aims' RPs and true RPs. Whereas true RPs desire to overturn the existing order, limited-aims RPs seek only to alter the existing distribution of resources, prestige, and values within the system. True RPs states seek to establish a new order; limited-aims RPs look to gain a more advantageous position within the order. Each of these state-types describes a state's fundamental orientation toward an existing international order. This preference determines a state's orientation toward the status quo. This, in turn, determines its relations with other states.⁵ To illustrate this point, a 'doggedly' SQP would seek to vigorously defend an order against a RP's attempt to revise or overturn it.

² Randall L. Schweller, *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's Strategy of World Conquest*, (New York: Columbia U P, 1998), 20.

³ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴ For a fuller discussion of non-security expansion, see *Ibid.*, 24-6.

⁵ Schweller discusses both status quo and revisionist powers as possessing aims that vary in scope. See *Ibid.*, 31-8.

2.2.2 Canada's Status Quo Interests

Canada is a 'doggedly' SQP. The interests that Canada pursues through its strong support of the existing rules-based order follows directly from the nature of its interests as a satisfied state. Canada enjoys a position of privilege within the order, which is based in part on its contributions to the Allied victory during the Second World War. Canada emerged from that war as a rich and prosperous country and seeks only to secure that which it already possesses. As Denis Stairs suggests, "...order is a conservative value and Canada is a conveniently located, property-rich state. That being said, it has no interests that acquisitive acts of *disorder* can serve."⁶ Broadly speaking, Canada is satisfied by both the substance of the existing rules-based order, as well as its position within it.

Canada's satisfaction with the existing order reflects its lack of power to revise the status quo in a way that might enhance its position. Indeed, without the protections afforded to it through the current order, Canada's relative weakness would be a grave strategic liability. Currently, however, the norms and rules embedded in the existing order serve Canada's interests by providing it with a degree of protection from such threats. As Yoav Gortzak writes, "...International norms...limit the policy tools available to dominant states seeking to impose their rule on the weak."⁷ While Canada cannot realistically expect to gain from destabilizing acts of expansionist aggression, its relative weakness leaves it vulnerable when other actors exhibit such behaviors. Canada's support for non-aggression norms embedded in the current order is therefore pragmatic. Canada has a strong interest in the strengthening and maintenance of such rules and norms. In the post-war era, Canadian FPEs have historically recognized the maintenance of the existing rules-based order as a first-order imperative. Conservative and Liberal prime ministers alike have maintained positions in support of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the United Nations, and other institutions. For this reason, the engagement policies Canada has pursued are generally in keeping with Canada's interests as a SQP.

Canada is often described as a 'Middle Power' in the Canadian foreign policy literature. Scholars and practitioners have defined this concept many ways. From a Realist perspective, Middle Powers can be conceived of simply as states of middling rank within the international

⁶ Denis Stairs, "Challenges and opportunities for Canadian foreign policy in the Paul Martin era," *International Journal* 58, no. 4 (Autumn 2003): 498.

⁷ Yoav Gortzak, "How Great Powers Rule: Coercion and Positive Inducements in International Order Enforcement," *Security Studies* 14, no. 4 (October 2005), 673.

system. These states lack the power and capabilities that Realists generally associate with Great Power status. However, these states are not Small Powers, either.⁸ This is the difference between states like Australia and Canada, on the one hand, and Bolivia and Latvia on the other.

As this rendering of the ‘Middle Power’ conception suggests, states like Canada and Australia occupy a position between Great Powers and Small Powers within the hierarchy of an international system. This middling rank does not alone determine a Middle Power’s satisfaction or dissatisfaction with status quo.⁹ Indeed, Middle Powers may be satisfied or dissatisfied with the status quo. Because of their greater stature, Great Powers tend to be more satisfied with the status quo than weaker states. Nonetheless, Great Powers – like Middle Powers – are sometimes dissatisfied as well.¹⁰ A state’s satisfaction with the status quo depends upon a range of system- and unit-level variables, ranging from the nature of the existing order to the unit-level variables that influence the shape of state policies.

A Middle Power that is satisfied within the context of one international order may be dissatisfied within the context of another. The possibility of systemic change, defined as the transition from one international order to the next, or from order to disorder, is important to consider in evaluating a Middle Power’s orientation toward the status quo. Wohlforth highlights the importance of considering “...any international system as temporary, and to look for the causes of change, which accumulate slowly but are realized in rare, concentrated bursts.”¹¹ A succession from one international order to the next may cause a previously satisfied Middle Power to become dissatisfied.

The strength of a Middle Power’s support for or opposition to the status quo depends upon its internal characteristics, as well as the general nature of the existing international order. An order must accommodate the interests of smaller and middle-sized powers for them to be satisfied. What follows from this is that a Middle Power is not *necessarily* a SQP. A Middle Power’s satisfaction with an order depends upon whether its leaders believe it is advantaged or disadvantaged by status quo arrangements.

⁸ Ronald L. Tammen ed., *Power Transitions: Strategies for the 21st Century*, (Washington DC: CQ P, 2000), 7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7-11.

¹¹ William C. Wohlforth, "Realism and the End of the Cold War," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (October 1995): 102; and William C. Wohlforth, "Gilpinian Realism and International Relations," *International Relations* 25, no. 4 (December 2011): 504.

SQPs may thus adjust their behavior as their leaders reassess the system's stability, as any change in this regard affects their security. However, a satisfied Middle Power lacks the resources required for system leadership and the capabilities needed to reliably defend the system. The same is true for most, but not all satisfied Powers. For this reason, SQPs depend upon the System Leader (hereafter SL) to willingly shoulder the heaviest part of the burden in defending the international order. As Tammen et al. suggest, the SL or 'dominant state' is by definition a satisfied state, and thus, a SQP.

As the leading SQP, the SL "...creates and maintains the global or regional hierarchy from which it accrues substantial benefits."¹² To maximize its security, the SL leads a coalition of satisfied states that all share an identical interest in preserving the existing order. As Tammen et al. suggest alliances between reliably conservative powers tend to be more durable than alliances between states that do not share a joint-assessment of the status quo.¹³ By uniting within the SL's coalition, satisfied states increase their share of the goods or values that are allocated under the system.¹⁴ According to this perspective, the SL provides international leadership, which SQPs accept out of self-interest. In *Relocating Middle Powers*, Andrew F. Cooper et al. discuss the idea of 'followership' in comparable terms.¹⁵

Tsyoshi Kawasaki describes Canada's post-war foreign policy in terms of its liberal internationalist character and 'status quo orientation.'¹⁶ Despite differences in terminology, there are important similarities between certain 'Middle Power' perspectives (distinct from the narrower rendering of the concept utilized above) and the neoclassical realist theory developed here. Both perspectives view Canada's primary interests in comparable terms. Describing the interests of Middle Powers, Robert Cox writes: "The primary national interest of the middle power...lay in an orderly and predictable world environment that embodied some limits to the ambition and reach of dominant powers."¹⁷ This view of Canada's interests is essentially

¹² Tammen et al., *Power Transitions*, 9.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 13-15.

¹⁴ As Jason W. Davidson suggests, satisfied states support the Status Quo because of their interest in maintaining certain systemic 'values' or 'goods'. These 'goods' relate to the maintenance of territory, status, markets, and ideology. See Jason W. Davidson, *The Origins of Revisionist and Status-Quo States*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 13.

¹⁵ Andrew F. Cooper, Richard A. Higgot and Kim Richard Nossal, *Relocating Middle Powers: Australia and Canada in a Changing World Order*, (Vancouver: UBC P, 1993), 14-16.

¹⁶ Tsyoshi Kawasaki, "Formulating Canada's Grand Strategy in Asia," *International Journal* 51, no. 1 (December 2000): 138.

¹⁷ Thomas Keating, "The Transition in Canadian Foreign Policy Through an English School Lens," *International Journal* 69, no. 2 (June 2014): 171.

identical to the view adopted here, which is based on insights drawn from Power Transition theory. The existing arrangement of the international order means that the primary interest Cox identifies equates to an interest in the defense and maintenance of the status quo.

Only a handful of Canadian foreign policy scholars explicitly identify Canada as a SQP.¹⁸ Still, the Canadian Middle Power literature tends to reflect the status quo orientation that Kawasaki attributed to Canadian foreign policy more generally. This tendency is strongly reflected in *Relocating Middle Powers*.¹⁹ Here, Cooper et al. draw upon aspects of Hegemonic Stability Theory (similar to Power Transition Theory) that neoclassical realists have incorporated into their framework. This perspective explains Canada's vigorous support for the American-led international order with reference to the various features that satisfy Canada's interests. These include international security institutions, such as NATO as well as the rules and norms that provide Canada with additional security.²⁰

As Schweller suggests, SQPs vigorously oppose any revisions to the status quo because of their fear of disorder. Small changes to the status quo may precipitate large and potentially unfavorable changes. Minimally, small revisions to the status quo can reduce a SQP's satisfaction with an order. Maximally, large undesirable changes destabilize the order and lead to systemic change. While the transition from one order to the next can be peaceful, it may also involve a hegemonic war, as it has in the past.²¹ SQPs tend to have been members of whichever coalition emerged victorious from the last hegemonic war (or in this case the Cold War). Senior coalition members played a key role in establishing the post-Cold War order, which was constructed in a manner that reflected their preferences. Nonetheless, the interests of the junior members were also taken into account. Because hegemonic war in the modern era carries with it the risk of nuclear war, systemic collapse would create grave risks to the security of all SQPs, regardless of rank. For this reason, these powers are more invested in the survival of the existing order than satiated states were previous to the nuclear age. Canada's post-war foreign policy alignment with

¹⁸ See Stairs, "Challenges and opportunities," 506.

¹⁹ Cooper et al. examine the underexplored concept of 'followership' in their discussion of Canadian Middle Power diplomacy. This contribution to the Hegemonic Stability literature is notable for its focus on what role 'followership' (as opposed to 'leadership' or 'hegemony') plays in supporting the stability of a Hegemonic international order. See Cooper, Higgot and Nossal, *Relocating Middle Powers*, 3-6, 12-16.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 116-143.

²¹ Schweller, *Deadly Imbalances*, 24.

the United States reflects its satisfaction with the American-led order. This satisfaction is increased by a persistent lack of viable alternatives.

2.3 The Existing International Order

At its core, the current order exists as an extension of America's hegemonic power. As Robert Kagan contends: "...rules and institutions are like scaffolding around a building; they don't hold the building up; the building holds them up."²² The weight of the rules, and importance of the institutions ultimately depend upon the power or powers that created them. From this perspective, the stability of the existing order is ultimately dependent upon US power. Former US Secretary of State Madeline Albright has even characterized the United States as an "indispensible nation." The retreat of American power would imply a retreat of the rules-based order it authored. While a healthy degree of skepticism regarding the limits of US military power is warranted in the aftermath of the Iraq conflict, Kagan's assessment still seems apt.

For the rules of an order to have much weight with dissatisfied states, a SL must enforce the foundational rules and norms of the order on a global basis. As Gortzak suggests, supporters of the existing order are sometimes confronted by "...challenges from weaker but recalcitrant states that do not have the capabilities or ambition to destroy the established order, but who fail to abide by some or all of the rules embedded in that order."²³ When rule-breakers go unpunished, the weight of those rules is lessened. Any willingness on the part of the Status Quo Coalition (hereafter SQC) to tolerate disorderly behavior might encourage more of the same from dissatisfied states. The SQC's failure to respond may signal to dissatisfied states that rules can be violated without consequence. This encourages further rule breaking and invites dangerous miscalculations. The stability of the established order thus depends upon the presence of an actor possessing a sufficient degree of power to enforce existing rules and norms.

Aside from power, however, the United States also possesses an ideological commitment to enforce the very liberal rules and democratic institutions that underpin the existing order. As Kupchan suggests, the US is prepared to adopt a strategy that goes further than simply balancing against its adversaries – it seeks to democratize them. Any strategy seeking to convert powerful

²² Robert Kagan, *The World America Made*, (New York City: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 99.

²³ Gortzak, "How Great Powers Rule": 666.

enemies into friends requires unparalleled strength.²⁴ This form of system leadership might be characterized as a form of liberal hegemony; it eschews the formal aspects of imperial rule in favor of political influence and control.²⁵ In this regard ideology matters when it comes to both the maintainability and legitimacy of the order. But what are the principles that will guide behaviors and shape the institutions that will inform global processes and practices? The belief in the liberal idea demands not only the endorsement of certain principles, but a willingness to defend the liberal values enshrined in the existing order.

2.3.1 The Obligations of Membership within the Status Quo Coalition

While Canada retains a critical interest in maintaining the stability and liberal character of the current order, it possesses only a fraction of the power required to serve this interest.²⁶ Canada depends upon the hegemonic power and the system leadership of the United States. This dependence (and lack of viable alternatives) underwrites Canada's support for both the US and the post-war order it helped establish. Despite its military preeminence, however, the US still depends on support from its allies, including Canada, to carry out its duties as the SL. Merlini suggests, "...maintaining American, and broadly Western, influence over the international order... may require (and indeed, has always required) the help and support of others at least as much as American efforts to impose it."²⁷ Based upon their behavior, US allies tend to agree. For its part, Canada has consistently maintained a broad strategic alignment with the US.

Canada's tendency to align its policies with those of the US is most notable in relation to security policy. As a founding member of the NATO, Canada has lent its persistent support to the Western alliance. While NATO is a foundational part of the Western security architecture, Tammen et al. suggest the ultimate purpose of NATO is to "...unify satisfied nations under the leadership of the dominant nation."²⁸ Perhaps the strongest persistent signal of Canada's commitment to and membership in the US-led SQC is its membership in NATO. Canada has expended significant resources in support of NATO missions over the past six decades, demonstrating the strength and credibility of its commitment to the status quo coalition.

²⁴ Charles A. Kupchan, "The Normative Foundations of Hegemony and The Coming Challenge to Pax Americana," *Security Studies* 23, no. 2 (April 2014): 248.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 249.

²⁶ Keating, "The Transition in Canadian Foreign Policy," 171.

²⁷ Cesare Merlini, "The Lonely Architect," review of *The Lonely Architect*, by Robert Kagan, *Survival* 54, no. 4 (2012): 158.

²⁸ Tammen et al., *Power Transitions*, 36.

Issues of importance to Washington are generally of importance in Ottawa. While principled differences frequently emerge between the elected leadership of the two countries, Ottawa possesses a strong interest in embracing the American position on issues of mutual importance. Roy Rempel argues that a failure to recognize and pursue this imperative tends to have a negative impact on the ability of Canadian governments to pursue the national interest.²⁹ His scathing 2006 critique of Canadian foreign policy charges that Canadian policy has too often neglected the national interest by ignoring this imperative. From this perspective, Canadian leaders have often pursued suboptimal policies because of their tendency to pursue ‘parochial’ interests alongside the national interest. Arguably, such behavior can alienate the US, thus reducing Canada’s influence in the place where it possesses the greatest chance of shaping international outcomes. The main effect of this, so the argument goes, can only be to reduce Canada’s capacity to pursue its interests independently.³⁰

A more pragmatic Canadian approach to its relations with the United States translates generally into diplomatic support for international initiatives that, while imperfect, are nonetheless achievable with Washington’s support. Still, the fulfillment of Canada’s obligations as a member of the SQC frequently results in domestic and international outcomes that domestic actors view as suboptimal. Because of this, there may be strong domestic political incentives to pursue suboptimal policies that seek mainly to capitalize on anti-American sentiments or a popular dissatisfaction with the direction of American foreign policy. Domestic political incentives and constraints may contribute to a FPE viewing ‘followership’ behavior associated with coalition membership as something of a political liability. The Chretien government’s refusal to lend meaningful support to the Bush administration’s 2003 invasion of Iraq is often explained with reference to the Liberal Party’s sensitivity to public opinion in Quebec, where the war was less popular.

NCR theorists contend that the failure of states to perceive or respond to strategic imperatives do so at the risk of their own security.³¹ A refusal to support some major American-led initiative aimed at servicing system stability would both jeopardize Canada’s influence where it matters most and leave Canada vulnerable to various forms of retaliation from the United

²⁹ Roy Rempel, *Dreamland: How Canada's Pretend Foreign Policy Has Undermined Sovereignty*, (Montreal: Breakout, 2006), 2.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realism*, 7.

States.³² Diverging from the American position could prove costly as a US president can rely on a variety of options and instruments to signal displeasure with Ottawa. Notwithstanding this, Canada has greater opportunity to affect outcomes from within an American-led coalition, underscoring the importance of maintaining a ‘seat at the table.’ Maximizing Canadian influence becomes more important if Canada’s doubts about the wisdom of some US action happen to be particularly well founded.

2.3.2 Considering the Alternative: The Collapse of the Existing Order

The question of whether the US is willing to carry out the duties of a system leader is of critical importance to status quo states within the existing order. This is especially the case if there is any degree of uncertainty. Canadian security interests are well served when state actors do not question the credibility of America’s commitment both to enforce the rules and norms of the post-Cold War order and use military force if necessary. International stability depends upon potential aggressors being deterred by the reasonable expectation that a US-led coalition will reliably enforce the rules when they are broken and punish offenders where necessary. Were the credibility of America’s international security commitments brought into question, most states – including Canada – would feel compelled to re-evaluate many of the core assumptions that inform their security posture. A dissatisfied state that harbors aggressive aims is more likely to wage war if its FPEs judge they can do so without triggering an American-led military intervention.

President Obama’s failure to enforce his so-called ‘red line’ on Syrian chemical weapons in 2013 undermined the credibility of his administration’s threats to use military force. The Obama administration’s abundant restraint may have altered Russian President Putin’s assessment of the strategic landscape and contributed to his willingness to attack Ukraine the following year, in 2014. Such assessments tend to be very subjective. Thus, it is useful here to consider the perspectives of state leaders. From French President Francois Hollande’s point of view, President Obama’s decision not to enforce his ‘red line’ on Syria “...was interpreted as weakness from the international community.” This, President Hollande bluntly concluded, “...provoked the crisis in Ukraine, the illegal annexation of Crimea, and what’s happening in

³² Rempel, *Dreamland*, 2.

Syria right now.”³³ The Obama administration’s strong reluctance to become embroiled in a new military conflict involving a small Middle Eastern power added to Moscow’s confidence that its actions in Ukraine would not bring it into direct conflict with the US. The Obama administration’s action thus created doubt about the extent of its commitment to preserving the status quo. There was, in effect, a gap between the strength of the language American FPEs used to communicate their commitment in maintaining the status quo, and their willingness to take concerted action towards this end. The emergence of this gap added to Vladimir Putin’s willingness to test the US and by extension the West’s commitment to Ukraine.

To understand Canada’s interest in preserving the status quo, the following counterfactual needs to be considered. The absence or retreat of a rules-based order would generate widespread uncertainty and distrust between state actors, sparking new regional security competitions and reinvigorating old ones. A loosening of the old order’s constraints could lead to new and dangerous interstate conflicts. The cost of Canadian involvement in two European wars during the twentieth century has made Canada painfully aware of the strategic necessity of taking proactive steps towards the maintenance of international stability. Aside from leaving Canada more vulnerable and more dependent on the US, the collapse of the current order could also have dire consequences. Should chaos accompany the collapse, Canada could very well find itself embroiled in new military conflicts – potentially on an unprecedented scale.

2.4 Understanding Canada’s Status Quo Interests in Ukraine

2.4.1 Canada’s Status Quo Orientation

A state’s orientation toward the status quo in large part determines the shape of its relations with other states.³⁴ During the Second World War, Canada’s status quo orientation placed it firmly within the emergent SQC – the Allied camp. During the Cold War, Canada’s status quo orientation placed it firmly within the US-led Western bloc; neutrality was never a realistic option. The end of the Cold War did not change Canada’s fundamentally conservative orientation. However, the post-Cold War context differed markedly from the one that preceded it. The immediate absence of a revisionist challenger after 1991 does not imply a total absence of threats to the existing order.

³³ Matthew Dalton, "Hollande Offers Sharp Critique of U.S. Policy," *Wall Street Journal*, October 12, 2016, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/hollande-offers-sharp-critique-of-u-s-policy-1476287400>.

³⁴ Tammen et al., *Power Transitions*, 109-13.

The goal of status quo diplomacy thus began shifting away from a Cold War posture of system defense toward a more proactive posture of system maintenance, and where permitted, peaceful system expansion. It was within this evolutionary context that the Mulroney government began to embrace a more interventionist foreign policy ethic. Since 1991, Canada's Ukraine policy has generally reflected this ethic. Canada has pursued its interest in seeing Ukraine transformed into a secure, satisfied state by lending its assistance to the process. Whereas Cold War constraints had left Canada without an opportunity structure to pursue this interest directly, it was now freed to pursue new strategies of engagement. Modeled on the George H. W. Bush administration's USSR strategy, the Mulroney government's Ukraine policy established the broad parameters of Canada's Ukraine policy, which persist to this day.

2.4.2 The Cold War Origins of Canada's Engagement Strategy

Several important developments in the lead-up and aftermath of the USSR's collapse shaped the subsequent pattern of East-West relations. A few of these developments bear brief mention here. Amidst the short period of post-Cold War détente, beginning in the late 1980s, Moscow began to favorably respond to Western engagement, especially under Mikhail Gorbachev. This change, however, was not the result of Western appeasement or the accommodation of Soviet interests. Rather, under Mr. Gorbachev, the USSR had shown a new willingness to make key concessions to the West. This signaled an important opportunity for SQPs given the Soviet Union's long-standing revisionist aspirations. According to Schweller et al., "...the status quo power views détente not simply as a process codifying the rules of the game to regulate further competition but rather as a means to convert the dissatisfied power into a status quo one."³⁵ Grappling with the collapse of internal power structures, the USSR began sending credible signals of its willingness to abandon its previously expansive revisionist program. Mr. Gorbachev's attempt to steer the USSR toward an embrace of the status quo reflected Moscow's worsening strategic situation under the failing Soviet system. The decline stripped the USSR of the requisite power needed for overturning the American-led order to be considered a realistic objective. Instead, Soviet FPEs sought a more conservative outcome of

³⁵ Randall L. Schweller and William C. Wohlforth, "Power Test: Evaluating Realism in Response to the End of the Cold War," *Security Studies* 9, no. 3 (March 2000): 90-1.

simply maintaining the resources already under Soviet control.³⁶ This shift in strategic thinking resulted in the USSR's embrace of the status quo. From late 1989 onward, the United States would accept no less.

At the time, the US administration adopted a bold new posture in its engagement with the USSR. The new policy was initially outlined in National Security Directive 23 (NSD 23), which set forth new objectives for US policy, namely the integration of the USSR into the existing international order.³⁷ By 1991, Soviet leaders accepted the American (and thus Western) definition of the security dilemma. Randall Schweller et al. describe this dramatic shift in Soviet policy in terms of "...the intellectual capitulation of the weaker side to the stronger."³⁸ This intellectual capitulation shaped subsequent patterns of engagement between the West and post-Soviet states by reinforcing Western confidence in the superiority of the Western political and economic model, and sending a clear signal as to the strength of the American-led order.

Soviet collapse did not, however, represent the 'End of History,' as Francis Fukuyama triumphantly declared. Rather, the occasion replaced the old challenge to the status quo with a new one. The retreat of Soviet power created a significant power vacuum in Central and Eastern Europe. New threats to regional stability emerged within this context of uncertainty. However, certain constants remained, including Canada's interest in the stability of the rules-based order. Indeed, this interest was only strengthened by the additional security Canada received from the end of the Cold War. Just as Canada and its allies had always possessed an interest (if not a way forward) in converting the USSR into a status quo power, they now possessed a similar interest with regards to the USSR's successor states. In the early post-Cold War era, the absence (perhaps temporary) of a revisionist superpower bent on overturning the existing order did not imply the existing order was secure.

2.4.3 Change and Continuity: The Status Quo Interest After 1991

Part of an effort to promote democratic development and human rights abroad, in 1991 the Mulroney government adopted a "good governance" policy consistent with the spirit of the historical moment. The policy represented an important shift in Canada's stance on the international norms governing state sovereignty. As Keating states, the policy was concerned

³⁶ Wohlforth, "Realism and the End of the Cold War," 119.

³⁷ Schweller and Wohlforth, "Power Test," 93.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 91.

with “...how states governed their societies and economies and on the right of external agents – governments, NGOs, and multilateral institutions – to intervene to protect or restore specific political and economic practices.”³⁹ More importantly, Canada’s policy brought it closer in line with the new American ‘freedom agenda,’ which sought to spread democratic and free-market principles abroad.⁴⁰ The Mulroney government’s new interest in the governance performance of other states paralleled Canada’s engagement posture toward Ukraine, which gained its independence through a plebiscite on December 1, 1991. Just as the US administration’s policy had been geared towards a transformation of the Soviet Union, Canada’s new Ukraine policy was geared towards encouraging a similar transformation.

After the tumultuous events of 1991, Western states possessed a strong interest in converting the newly independent post-Soviet states into reliable status-quo powers. Because revisionist states tend to act unpredictably and pursue their interests at the expense of system stability, it is especially important for SQPs to identify and decipher those states that harbor revisionist ambitions, or favor policies that might otherwise undermine system stability. According to Wohlforth, “...the purpose of engagement is to restore through peaceful means...the principle of legitimacy with respect to the existing order; and (2) systemic equilibrium that has been badly disrupted (and may be further undermined) by a dramatic shift in the balance of power.”⁴¹ The object of Canada’s early engagement with Ukraine, therefore, was to clarify whether and to what extent it would accept the legitimacy and constraints of the existing international order. This determination was critical in the case of Ukraine, which had achieved its independence while in possession of a large portion of the Soviet nuclear stockpile.

2.4.4 Canada’s Institutional Signaling Behavior: Advancing Interests in Ukraine

For Canadian FPEs to determine the priority attached to the Canada-Ukraine relationship or to devise an engagement strategy, it was necessary to gain reliable information about the Ukrainian government’s positions on issues of importance to Canada. This would clarify the nature and extent of Canada’s interests in Ukraine as well as the range of practical options the

³⁹ Thomas Keating, *Canada and World Order* (Don Mills: Oxford U P, 2013), 168.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Schweller and Wohlforth, “Power Test,” 81.

government had available for pursuing these interests. There was, however, an underlying problem.

...the key problem for policymakers is the difficulty of distinguishing revisionist states with exploitative preferences from status quo states with defensive intentions. It may be possible for security dilemmas to be avoided or ameliorated if status quo states can provide credible information to distinguish themselves from revisionists eager to exploit the unwary.⁴²

To differentiate between status quo and revisionist states, policymakers rely on a type of behavior that Weinberger terms “institutional signaling.”⁴³ This is the process whereby a state signals its support or opposition to the status quo. The perceived credibility of the signal is strengthened if the costs associated with engaging in the behavior are non-trivial. The perceived credibility of a signal therefore varies case by case, as some signals are stronger than others. A hegemonic power that declines to press its advantage by exploiting a weakened rival sends a strong signal of its benign intentions and support for the status quo. At the end of the Cold War, the US adopted such a posture in its relations with the USSR.

G. John Ikenberry’s concept of ‘hegemonic restraint’ is useful for explaining why Soviet FPEs chose capitulation over conflict at the end of the Cold War. While naturally fearful that the USSR’s weakness might be exploited, Soviet FPEs tended to view Western assurances to the contrary as credible. As Ikenberry notes, the presence of institutions within the American-led order factored in to the calculus of Soviet FPEs.⁴⁴ Institutions facilitate the exchange of credible signals and form an integral part of the global governance structure. Moreover, institutions distribute system goods amongst coalition members, enhancing their satisfaction with the status quo.⁴⁵ The longstanding US willingness to accept restraints within institutions sends strong signals of its benign intentions towards SQPs. What follows is that a state that can credibly signal its support of the status quo enjoys a reasonable expectation that the US will not pursue hostile or aggressive policies towards it.

According to Ikenberry, ‘hegemonic restraint’ is a strategy that great powers use to reassure others its intentions are not hostile, thereby attenuating the security dilemma to some

⁴² Seth Weinberger, “Institutional Signaling and the Origins of the Cold War,” *Security Studies* 12, no. 4 (January 2003): 86.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁴⁵ Schweller and Wohlforth, “Power Test,” 37.

extent.⁴⁶ By engaging in this type of signaling behavior during the late Cold War, the US provided Soviet FPEs with reliable information that enabled them to make important determinations regarding the potential risks involved with pursuing retrenchment. From this perspective, Soviet FPEs regarded the US administration's institutional signaling behavior as a credible indicator that America would continue to support the status quo. By subjecting itself to institutional restraints, the hegemon "...thereby dampens the fears of domination and abandonment by secondary states".⁴⁷ In Ikenberry's view, the presence of such incentives tends to explain why hegemons construct institutions in the first place.⁴⁸ The way the Cold War was resolved demonstrates the important role such institutional signaling behavior can play in conditioning the form of systemic change. A hegemonic war between the United States and the Soviet Union was never inevitable. However, neither was the peaceful transition that occurred.

Longstanding Westerns support for and participation in a functional rules-based international order helped to provide Soviet FPEs with a credible picture of Western intentions at the time. After the dissolution of the USSR, the leaders of newly independent states, including Ukraine, tended to accept Western assurances as credible. This accounts for Ukraine's ratification of the Budapest Memorandum – which saw Ukraine give up its nuclear weapons in exchange for great power security assurances. Indeed, it is an irony of history that Ukraine's leaders placed perhaps too much faith in the credibility of Western assurances. The various assurances that Canada sought to elicit from Ukraine are consistent to the institutional signaling behaviors that Weinberger describes. SQPs act on the assumption that the short-term costs involved with engaging in institutional signaling behaviors are outweighed by the long-term benefits they can expect to receive.⁴⁹ Canada's elicitation of such behavior from Ukraine is reflective of its own interest in deciphering Ukraine's orientation toward the status quo. Such an assessment is necessary first step towards persuading Ukraine to accept an evaluation of the status quo that mirrors its own.

⁴⁶ Weinberger, "Institutional Signaling," 89.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 89.

2.5 Status Quo Powers and Institutional Signals

The dissolution of the USSR presented status quo states with a unique historical opportunity to enhance the stability of the American-led international order. Newly independent capitals – including Kyiv – were eager to access Western capital and expertise.⁵⁰ The bargaining position of middling rank states such as Canada was somewhat enhanced within this unique historical context. States such as Ukraine valued good relations with countries like Canada because of their expectation that it would afford them with greater opportunities for growth and legitimacy. This moment of enhanced leverage no doubt contributed to the anticipated effectiveness of conditional aid agreements. Such agreements provided Canada with a means of eliciting strong institutional signals from Ukraine.

In 1991, the Mulroney government made Canadian engagement contingent on the new Ukrainian government's willingness to credibly signal an acceptance of the bedrock rules and norms of the post-Cold War international order.⁵¹ Canada's attempts toward eliciting such commitments reflected its concern in gaining necessary information about the new Ukrainian government's intentions. In this case, Canadian FPEs sought reliable information to assess Ukraine's commitment to the principles of the rules-based order. Such determinations were to help inform the goals and parameters of Canada's Ukraine policy.

Canadian FPEs would rely on institutional signaling behavior to determine what Canada's international priorities should be. While Ukraine's fate had important implications for the stability of the current order, Canada could not afford to expend its resources in pursuit of unrealistic objectives. If Canadian diplomats had, for instance, assessed that Ukraine was unlikely to support the principles of the rule-based order or had no intention in pursuing the internal reforms that Canada viewed as necessary, this would have shaped Canada's engagement priorities in Ukraine accordingly. Without a reasonable expectation of success, Canadian interest in Ukraine's successful transition would not have justified the expenditure of significant resources in pursuit of an unattainable goal.

⁵⁰ Jeff Sallot, "Post-Communist Europe: Siren calls from the old country Canadians of European ancestry are being invited to return to their homelands, and bring their cash and expertise with them," *Globe & Mail*, August 1, 1992.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

2.6 Conclusion

Since 1991, Canada has made Ukraine a priority. The rather limited resources that Canada could bring to bear, of course, constrained its ability to pursue its objectives in Ukraine. And although Canada managed to leverage its limited influence to successfully elicit diplomatic assurances and other institutional signals from Ukraine, the response from Ukraine has been mixed. After two decades of political engagement, Canada has sought more and deeper commitments – reflecting the consistency of its own interests in providing a map for Ukraine’s eventual transformation into a successful SQP. But Canada has also provided Ukraine with various forms of development assistance – especially where doing so would help Ukraine to fulfill the bilateral and international commitments that Canada had initially elicited. In the end, for Canada’s interests to be satisfied, it is important that Ukraine achieve these objectives in a manner that adds to the stability of the international order. This consideration has conditioned the shape of Canada’s engagement with Ukraine since 1991.

Chapter 3: The Ukrainian Crisis and World Order

3.1 Introduction

The Status Quo Coalition's (hereafter SQC) failure to deter Russia's unilateral revision of the post-Cold War European order is at the root of the ongoing post-Maidan security dilemma. Russia's actions presented a direct threat to Canada's interest in maintaining the stability of the existing liberal order, highlighting and reinforcing the strategic imperatives associated with system defense. Canada's ability to respond to these imperatives was nonetheless constrained by its relative weakness compared to Russia, as well as its dependence on US leadership. This combination of system-level incentives and constraints necessitated Canada's participation in the SQC's collective response to the Ukrainian crisis. Accordingly, this chapter asks: What interest does Canada have in vigorously supporting Ukraine in its conflict with Russia? How and why has the broader SQC (of which Canada is a part) pursued its interests in the context of the crisis? What has been Canada's role in the coalition's response to the crisis? Which system-level incentives and constraints shaped its response? Given Canada's status quo interests, middling rank, and the immediate systemic imperatives and constraints it faced, was its response to the Ukraine crisis optimal or suboptimal?

3.2 The New Security Dilemma

3.2.1 Russia as a Limited-aims Revisionist Power

Having only minimal resources to maintain its diminished power capability, Russia inherited the USSR's status quo orientation. During the 1990s, Russian leaders were forced to cope with the new limits of Russian power. The economic and social woes that followed the USSR's collapse imposed significant constraints on Russia's capabilities throughout the 1990s, and early 2000s. As Tammen et al. noted in 2000, "Right now, Russia can do little more than

complain.”¹ By pursuing further integration into the US-led order and complying with most of the rules most of the time, Russia sent credible signals of its acceptance of the status quo, thus solidifying its position as a SQP.² By the mid-2000s, Russia’s economic outlook had improved significantly as new energy revenues filled state coffers. This influx of revenues allowed Russia to begin rebuilding its military and intelligence capabilities. Having attained power and capabilities that it did not possess in the immediate aftermath of the USSR’s collapse, however, Russia has grown more assertive. This new assertiveness is reflected in a willingness to challenge the post-Cold War settlement by attempting to restore an exclusive sphere of influence on its western borders. For this reason, Russia is no longer a SQP but rather a ‘limited-aims’ Revisionist Power.

3.2.2 The post-Maidan Security Dilemma in Perspective

Russia’s expansionist aggression against Ukraine is comparable to Saddam Hussein’s aggression against Kuwait. Revisions to a regional order may create conflicts that filter up to the level of the international order. Likewise, dissatisfaction with an international order may result in conflicts that filter downward to the level of the regional order. Either way, SQPs have a strong interest in upholding the rules and norms embedded in the existing order and preserving the status quo.³ These states seek to punish rule-breakers by imposing costs on them until they return to compliance, and more generally, to deter further challenges. As well, the destabilizing second- and third-order effects of one challenge can include further disorder by inspiring dissatisfied powers to mount their own challenges. This type of concern was one of the primary drivers of the Gulf War.⁴ There is, however, a critical difference between Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. The coalition’s ability to respond to the latter challenge is significantly constrained due to Russia’s more robust deterrence capabilities. This was the main factor that precluded a US-led military intervention to restore the pre-2014 territorial status quo.

¹ Ronald L. Tammen ed., *Power Transitions: Strategies for the 21st Century*, (Washington DC: CQ P, 2000), 136.

² Since 1991 Russia’s improved situation was due in part to the benefits it has received from its entry into or association with many of the key Western clubs. In addition to gaining membership in the International Monetary Foundation and G8 state grouping in 1992, Russia acceded to the NATO-Russia Founding Act in 1997 and gained full membership in the World Trade Organization in 2012. In each instance, Russia gained greater access to important sites of global governance and increased its global share of valued goods.

³ Tammen et al., *Power Transitions*, 8.

⁴ Richard Haas, *A World in Disarray: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order*, (NYC: Penguin, 2017), 3.

For the first time in the post-Cold War era, the SQC faced Cold War-style constraints. Russia's challenge has, for this reason, exceeded the coalition's capacity for short-term system defence and necessitated a long-term approach.

As Wohlforth suggests, NCR theories of foreign policy "...encourage scholars...to be on the lookout for gaps between the capabilities of states and the demands placed upon them by their international roles."⁵ The SQC's immediate lack of options for restoring the pre-2014 territorial status quo suggests the emergence of one such gap. Given Canada's conservative interest, it possessed a strong interest in supporting the US-led effort to impose costs on Russia for its revision to the territorial status quo. Furthermore, Canada and other SQPs had a strong interest in restoring the European territorial status quo and deterring further challenges to the existing international order. Since the end of the Cold War, the SQC has shown a continued willingness to take actions – up to and including the use of military force – in defence of the existing order. Prior to the Gulf War, there were some, including Saddam Hussein, who had either doubted US resolve to maintain a rules-based order or misunderstood the extent of the System Leader's (hereafter SL) commitment.⁶ The war established greater clarity around both issues.

In contrast to Iraq's attempted annexation of Kuwaiti territory, Russia's occupation of Crimea was not immediately reversible. The SQC's limited options in responding to Russia's aggression against Ukraine suggests a widening gap between the US's commitment to defending the existing order and its actual capability to do so. The lack of an effective short-term response necessitated a long-term non-kinetic approach. This approach entailed levying punitive economic sanctions against Russia for its non-compliance and providing direct support to Ukraine. The efficacy of this response would depend upon the costs associated with the sanctions regime, which required concerted action by the SQC. Nonetheless, the SQC's failure to deter Russia from its path of non-compliance in the first place pointed to a decline in system stability – and the source of the post-Maidan security dilemma.

⁵ William C. Wohlforth, "Realism and the End of the Cold War," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (October 1995): 102.

⁶ Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 6.

3.2.3 *The Situational Interests of Status Quo Powers Amidst the Crisis*

In an era of US retrenchment and Russian non-compliance, responsible Status Quo Powers (hereafter SQP) could no longer take for granted the stability of the existing order.⁷ SQPs like Canada and the United Kingdom appeared to recognize their shared interest in working to offset the worst of the short- and medium-term consequences of US retrenchment.⁸ This was accomplished, in part, by volunteering to shoulder a greater share of the costs involved with providing for the SQC's deterrence capabilities.⁹ While the viability of the existing order still ultimately depended upon US power, the support of followers like Canada nonetheless helped dampen the destabilizing effects of US retrenchment. Nonetheless, the strategies of SQPs would depend on whether they possessed confidence in the SL and its leadership objectives. It would highlight the importance of sub-systemic factors to the strength and unity of the SQC.

The willingness of SQPs to follow was still of vital importance to international stability under the circumstances. This was certainly the case within the context of the Ukrainian crisis. The success of the SQC's sanctions-based strategy depended on the followership of SQPs to a greater extent than would have been the case if a kinetic response were a viable option. During the Gulf War, the SQC's support served mainly to further legitimate a US-centered military action. By contrast, the SQC's role in the Ukrainian crisis had a more direct bearing on outcomes at both the regional and global level. Mr. Obama's coalition-based approach to managing Russian aggression was rooted in necessity rather than strategic preference. The necessity of mobilizing a broad-based coalition flowed directly from the Obama administration's assessment of both the security dilemma and its limited options in responding to Russia's challenge. US sanctions alone would have been insufficient to compel a change in Russian behaviour. A unified SQC, by contrast, was capable of imposing a much costlier sanctions regime.

The Obama administration recognized the situational importance of encouraging followership.¹⁰ To a large extent, US leadership behaviour enabled and actively facilitated SQP

⁷ Robert Kagan traces the beginning of the period of American retrenchment to the start of the Obama period in 2009. See Robert Kagan, "The Weight of Geopolitics," *Journal of Democracy* 26, no. 1 (January 2015): 21.

⁸ See Mr. Harper's comments as quoted in Colin Robertson, "Harper's World View," *Policy Options*, (October 2011), <http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/the-new-normal-majority-government/harpers-world-view/>.

⁹ Both Canada and the United Kingdom joined the United States in deploying military trainers to Ukraine. It is notable that Canada deployed more trainers than did the UK. This is discussed further in Chapter 4.

¹⁰ In a 2014 speech, President Obama alluded to the importance of assembling a broad international coalition in response to Russia's challenge to world order. See Office of the Press Secretary, "Remarks by the President in

followership. However, certain non-systemic factors occasionally complicated this approach by tempering the willingness of certain SQPs to engage in pragmatic followership behaviour. The SL can lead only to the extent that others are willing to follow. While the Harper government recognized and responded to the followership imperatives associated with the crisis, the governments of other SQPs, including Germany, were more reluctant to respond in this manner.¹¹

3.3 The Harper Government's Response to the Ukrainian Crisis

3.3.1 Canadian Followership Amidst the Ukrainian Crisis

The Harper government's response to the post-Maidan security dilemma paralleled the US position, and consisted of two main elements. First, Canada lent its support to US-backed measures designed to impose costs on Russia for its non-compliance. The objective was to manage the direct effects of Russia's behaviour, as well as the potential indirect effects, with the aim of preserving system stability. Second, Canada increased its direct support for Ukraine to raise the costs of further aggression while counteracting the immediate effects of Russia's destabilizing aggression. However, the post-Maidan security dilemma also produced a set of systemic incentives related to system-defence, which helps explain the shape and direction of the Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis. Within this context, the strength of these incentives rendered followership an even greater than usual strategic imperative for SQPs. Not all SQPs pursued this imperative with the same urgency or degree of commitment as the Harper government.¹² This had to do, in part, with the determinative role played by certain sub-systemic factors, which produced countervailing pressures that reduced the willingness of some SQP FPEs to engage in followership.¹³

Address to European Youth," (Washington, DC: *The White House*, March 26, 2014), <https://whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/03/26/remarks-president-address-european-youth>.

¹¹ F. Stephen Larrabee discusses the strength of German-Russian relations as a factor that has complicated the establishment of a "...coherent transatlantic policy towards Russia." See Stephen F. Larrabee, "Russia, Ukraine, and Central Europe: The Return of Geopolitics," *Journal of International Affairs* 63 no. 2 (April 2010): 48.

¹² Michael Petrou, "It's time for tougher sanctions against Russia," *Macleans*, August 28, 2014, <http://www.macleans.ca/politics/worldpolitics/two-options-for-the-west-concede-ukraine-to-russia-or-escalate-sanctions/>; and Mark MacKinnon, "A divided Western front is playing towards Putin's endgame," *Globe & Mail*, February 5, 2015, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/a-divided-western-front-is-playing-towards-putins-endgame/article22825463/%201/2/>.

¹³ These unit-level factors are discussed in greater depth in Chapter 4.

The efficacy of the SQC response depended upon the willingness of SQPs to enact sanctions on a unanimous basis.¹⁴ A SQP that undermines the efficacy of the sanctions regime does so at a cost to its own security. By calling into question the SQC's resolve, such actions would weaken its deterrence capabilities and thus its collective security. If the coalition's resolve was already in doubt, as it was in early 2014 owing to a combination of US retrenchment and political turmoil in the European Union, the potential risks associated with a weak response were still greater.¹⁵ Given the situational imperatives, the Harper government's attempts to strengthen coalition unity and mobilize international support around the coalition agenda were pragmatic, and reflective of a sophisticated understanding of the security dilemma.

3.3.2 Assessing the Harper Government's View of the Ukrainian Crisis

There is no doubt that the Harper government rejected Russia's definition of the security dilemma and viewed Mr. Putin's government as the source of threat.¹⁶ In September 2014, Mr. Harper declared, "...the only truth we can be certain of in any statement coming out of the Putin regime is that the truth must be something else entirely."¹⁷ This was a rather plain way of stating that his government rejected Russia's definition of the security dilemma and held deep doubts regarding the credibility of Russian assurances. By demonstrating its blatant disregard for the rules of the existing order, Russia diminished the wider credibility of its existing bi-lateral and multi-lateral commitments. It also brought into doubt Russia's credibility regarding assurances in the future. By challenging the status quo, Russia caused responsible SQPs to identify it as a strategic adversary. All of this significantly diminished the expected value of engaging with the Russian government as long as Vladimir Putin was at its helm.

¹⁴ Tammen et al., *Power Transitions*, 116-7.

¹⁵ The SQC's resolve was increasingly in question from the 2008 Russia-Georgia conflict onwards. These doubts increased, owing to the Obama administration's failure to enforce its red lines in Syria and mounting political turmoil in the European Union.

¹⁶ Describing the Maidan as a 'coup', Vladimir Putin sought to shroud Russia's annexation of Crimea under the guise of international law and the principle of self-determination. Putin claimed that Russia had a right to protect ethnic Russians beyond its borders, and cited Kosovo's independence as a precedent for Russia's military intervention. He blamed the West for ignoring Russia's security concerns through the expansion of NATO and the EU. Putin portrayed the West as the aggressor and denied any wrongdoing by his government. He maintained that Russia's actions were wholly legitimate. See The Kremlin, "Address by President of the Russian Federation," *President of Russia*, March 18, 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>; and Steven Pifer, *The Eagle and the Trident: US-Ukraine Relations in Turbulent Times*, (Washington DC: Brookings, 2017), 5.

¹⁷ Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, "PM delivers remarks at the United for Ukraine Gala," (Ottawa: PMO, September 11, 2014), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

The Harper government's position paralleled the Obama administration's position and reflected a concern for how Russia's actions threatened the stability of the rules-based order.¹⁸ Speaking before a gathering of the NATO Council of Canada, Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird articulated the government's understanding of the wider stakes involved with the crisis. The crisis, according to Mr. Baird, "...isn't just about Ukraine." Mr. Baird explained that through its actions, Russia has weakened "...the very foundations of our rules-based international system." In stark terms, Mr. Baird laid out the potential consequences of declining order, stating, "The absence of rules and of trust, compounded by aggression founded on deception, erodes stability and leads to chaos."¹⁹ Mr. Baird alluded to the potentially dangerous second- and third-order effects that could follow from acts of disorder. Such a concern was pragmatic and in line with how SQP policy makers viewed their interests during comparable situations in the past. Moreover, it reflected the Harper government's acceptance of the SL's definition of the security dilemma.²⁰

In late 2014, Mr. Baird took the unusual step of having an opinion editorial piece published in the *Toronto Star*. He argued that Russia was acting against its own interests in Ukraine. To support his view, the cabinet minister cited some of the ways in which Russia's aggression had contributed to its increasing isolation from the international community. In Mr. Baird's estimate, Vladimir Putin's foreign policy risked making Russia's "...historical fear of encirclement a self-fulfilling prophecy, by turning friends into adversaries."²¹ This represented an explicit rejection of the Russian definition of the security dilemma and thus of Russia's strategic rationale for invading Ukraine and annexing Crimea. Mr. Baird's words also reaffirmed Canada's historical preference for a cooperative relationship with Russia. However, the Harper

¹⁸ Mr. Obama characterized Russia's aggression against Ukraine in value-laden terms similar to those used by Mr. Harper and other Canadian officials, describing Russia's actions a "...challenge to our ideals – to our very international order." See Office of the Press Secretary, "Remarks by the President in Address to European Youth."

¹⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development, "Address by Minister Baird to the NATO Council of Canada Conference – Ukraine: The Future of International Norms," (Ottawa: DFATD, November 18, 2014), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

²⁰ President Obama characterized Russia as the aggressor and its actions in Ukraine "...recall the days when Soviet tanks rolled into Eastern Europe." In the same speech, he described the US response to the crisis as "...standing with our allies on behalf of the international order." See Office of the Press Secretary, "Remarks by the President at the United States Military Academy Commencement Ceremony," (Washington, DC: *The White House*, May 28, 2014), <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/05/28/remarks-president-united-states-military-academy-commencement-ceremony>.

²¹ John Baird, "Russia's Aggression Is Against Its Own Best Interest," *Toronto Star*, November 21, 2014. https://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2014/11/21/john_baird_russias_aggression_is_against_its_own_best_interest.html

government's willingness to engage with Russia was conditional. Addressing the people of Russia rather than its government, Foreign Minister Baird stressed that the "People of Russia have and deserve a prominent place in today's international order."²² He went on to describe how the Russian government had, through its actions in Ukraine, isolated itself and diminished its capacity for international leadership.

Throughout the crisis, the Harper government maintained that Russia's leaders only had themselves to blame for Russia's increasing isolation.²³ In making this case, the Harper government pointedly referred to the 'Putin regime' rather than Russia. The message to Russians, Ukrainians, and the world was that Canada did not view the people of Russia as responsible for Vladimir Putin's aggressive foreign policy. This message set the tone for future Canadian-Russian relations by affirming that Canada had no desire to punish the people of Russia for the actions of their increasingly authoritarian leaders. Nonetheless, Canada and other members of the SQC felt it necessary to pursue their situational security interests by imposing sanctions on the individuals and entities connected to Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

3.3.3 Continuity and Change in Canada-Ukraine Relations

Canada has lent its support to Ukrainian domestic reforms agenda since 1991. As such, there is considerable continuity between Canada's pre- and post-Maidan support for Ukraine. Throughout the Ukrainian crisis, the Harper government adopted an approach that was in keeping with the spirit of the 'Special Relationship.' Circumstances, however, have changed significantly since 2014. The threat to Ukraine's national existence has intensified. In light of this, Canada has increased its assistance to Ukraine with an eye towards helping the state become more resilient to destabilizing Russian influence. Thus, the Harper government stepped up Canada's traditional support for capacity building projects aimed at strengthening the performance of the state, supporting economic development, and encouraging the growth of civil society. These efforts aided the Ukrainian government in counteracting the destabilizing effects of Russia's actions against Ukraine.

Much of this has to be interpreted against the backdrop of Canada-Ukraine relations since independence. It has been a key long-term objective of Canada's Ukraine strategy to help the

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

country achieve greater prosperity and better governance. This, however, is an insufficient end in and of itself to justify Canada's prioritization of the relationship. Since 1991, Canada has recognized that Ukraine's attainment of these goals will leave it better positioned to achieve security gains and increase the likelihood that it will pursue its interest in a manner that is compatible with the rules of the existing order. A prosperous, well-governed and secure Ukraine would likely be a strong supporter of the status quo. In theory, this would contribute to international peace and stability. From this perspective, it is in the SQC's interests to have a state with Ukraine's resources as a member. The addition of Ukraine's manpower and military-industrial complex would add to the SQC's defensive capabilities and contribute to system stability by strengthening the SQC while degrading Russia's capacity to mount a successful challenge to the post-Cold War European order.²⁴

3.3.4 Assessing the Situational Limits of Canadian Followership

While the coalition has a strong interest in hardening the Ukrainian state as a means of deterring Russia from seizing further territory, Ukraine will require significant military assistance in order to achieve lasting security. Thus far, however, coalition members have only provided Ukraine with what has been termed 'non-lethal' military aid. The Obama administration argued in public that lethal military aid was not necessary. Clearly disagreeing with this assessment, Ukraine lobbied Canada and a number of EU countries for more support while pressuring the US for assistance.²⁵ The Obama administration sought to avoid giving the Russian government an opportunity to re-cast the conflict as a US proxy war against Russia. Moreover, while providing Ukraine with 'lethal' military assistance would have enhanced its security in the near-term, Ukraine's capacity to capitalize on those gains was less certain. Ukraine's security ultimately depended upon the success of domestic reforms.

The above calculus, however, was not the reason behind the Harper government's reluctance to provide lethal military aid to Ukraine. Canada chose not to send lethal aid because of the Obama administration's unwillingness to do so.²⁶ Following the US lead, Canada provided

²⁴ According to F. Stephen Larrabee, Ukraine's successful integration into the EU and other Western structures would preclude "...the restoration of Soviet hegemony in the post-Soviet space." See Larrabee, "Russia, Ukraine and Central Europe," 38.

²⁵ These include Poland, the United Kingdom, and France.

²⁶ Paul Grod, the president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, seemed to recognize this as well, suggesting that it would be a "...no brainer" for Canada to send lethal military aid to Ukraine if the United States did so. See Steven

only ‘non-lethal military’ assistance to Ukraine, while expanding its support for the Ukrainian reforms agenda.²⁷ Canada’s followership behaviour was thus primarily bounded by the limits of US leadership. Had US leadership been less limited, Canada’s followership behaviour, however, would have still been constrained by Canada’s modest military capabilities.

While Canada’s ability to contribute to coalition efforts was constrained by its relative lack of power, the Harper government nonetheless lent vigorous and enthusiastic support to the US leadership agenda. Within the context of the crisis, the Harper government’s behaviour was pragmatic. However, there were caveats. While the Harper government demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the security dilemma and supported American leadership, Canada’s historical neglect of its armed forces diminished Ottawa’s influence within the context of any international security crisis.²⁸ As Rempel argued in 2005, Canada’s neglect of its military capabilities, and a “...chronic indifference to matters of national defence” have shrunk Canadian influence exactly where it matters most – in the US.²⁹

Canada’s track record on defence spending made the Harper government a somewhat imperfect messenger internationally on the importance of collective security. Even within Canada, the government’s boisterous rhetoric received a mixed welcome. Some members of the Canadian press were critical of the Harper government’s approach. The criticism tended to center on either the credibility of the government’s rhetoric and thus its efficacy or the notion that the Harper government’s response to the Ukrainian crisis was politicized. These claims were often made in tandem.³⁰

E. W. Bopp chided the Harper government’s approach to the Ukraine crisis for being “...all hat and no cow.”³¹ Implicit was the recognition that Canada was not a great power. This led Bopp to conclude that Mr. Harper’s rhetoric was ‘cowboy talk’ – meaning here substantively

Chase, “Stephen Harper heads to Ukraine, but won’t commit to providing weapons,” *Globe & Mail*, June 5, 2015, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/stephen-harper-heads-to-ukraine-still-wont-provide-weapons/article24816921/>.

²⁷ Western military aid to Ukraine has been geared towards supporting the development of the Ukrainian Armed Forces’ defensive, rather than offensive capabilities. Towards this end, Canada has provided Ukraine with geospatial intelligence, body armour, thermal goggles, and training assistance.

²⁸ Roy Rempel, *Dreamland: How Canada's Pretend Foreign Policy Has Undermined Sovereignty*, (Montreal: Breakout, 2006), 93-7.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁰ For example, see Steven Chase, “Harper takes leading role in G7 against Russia,” *Globe & Mail*, March 4, 2014, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/harper-takes-leading-role-in-g7-against-russia/article17727891/>.

³¹ E. W. Bopp, “Re: The new foreign policy, March 28 - ‘Canada's Weak Voice’,” *Ottawa Citizen*, March 31, 2014, <http://www.pressreader.com/canada/ottawa-citizen/20140331/281741267383803>.

empty. That Canada lacked hard power may have been true, but the implication was that Canada's approach was suboptimal. Had Canada been isolated in its position, Bopp's criticism would have been fair. But Canada was not isolated. The Harper government's efforts were part of the preponderant SQC's effort to deter Russia. Mr. Harper carried the SQC's message and this message was backed up by the SQC's power. Canada's vigorous embrace of this position, as alien as it may have been for some Canadians, did not signal a departure from the coalition's position. Indeed, the Harper government's position was very much in line with the position of the Western alliance.

Canada's strongly pro-order, pro-Ukrainian agenda would not have been possible were it not for US leadership. The Obama administration sent credible signals of its preferences, which Canada adopted wholesale. This reflected in part, Canada's middling rank; it was a "price-taker," rather than a "price-maker."³² With responsible system leadership on offer from the SL, an SQP of middling rank like Canada had, under most circumstances, no better alternative than to reciprocate with followership. Anything less was likely to be suboptimal over the long run and certainly of no help to Canada's credibility where it mattered most – in the US.³³ Amidst the Ukrainian crisis, Canada's moderate degree of hard power constrained the Harper government's options for signaling its strong support for the US leadership agenda. This, however, did not negate Canada's interest in signaling such support in the clearest manner possible. In this regard, rhetoric played an important role.

3.4 Conclusion

Neoclassical realist theories of foreign policy generally assign primacy to system-level variables, and this case is no exception. Given the gravity of the security dilemma, the government's policy can be explained with reference to strong system-level variables. The Harper government's post-Maidan policies were formulated in response to an exogenous shock and within parameters that were largely defined by the limits of US leadership. Given Canada's rank, interests, and capabilities, the Harper government's followership amidst the post-Maidan security dilemma was largely optimal given the immediate constraints. Mr. Harper's rhetoric was strident, but not sensationalist given the risks that Canada would face if the existing order were to

³² Douglas Alan Ross, "Canada's international security strategy: Beyond reason but not hope?" *International Journal* 62, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 357.

³³ Rempel, *Dreamland*, 2.

collapse. The evidence suggests that the government was acting primarily in response to systemic incentives and constraints. The shape and direction of the Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis was also shaped, however, by unit-level incentives and constraints, as well as variables at the individual level of analysis. The important role played by these unit- and individual-level variables is discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Supporting Ukraine: Assessing the Impact of Intervening Variables at the Unit-Level

4.1 Introduction

Prime Minister Harper repeatedly pledged that under his government's leadership, Canada would no longer "go along to get along" in international affairs.¹ In 2014, the government had its first opportunity to make good on that pledge within the context of a serious international crisis. The Harper government responded to the crisis in a way that was uncharacteristically robust for Canada. It was in many ways a break with post-Cold War tradition. The shift brought a degree of realism back into Canadian foreign policy. This realism tempered, to some extent, the idealism of the previous era of Canada's internationalist-style engagement, coupling it to a firmer conception of the national interest. In this sense, the Harper government oversaw an important shift in Canadian foreign policy. This shift occurred quickly and with little in the way of opposition. With a majority government, Mr. Harper could conduct an independent foreign policy. But what were the specific unit-level variables (including incentives and constraints) that shaped Mr. Harper's policy response to the Ukraine crisis?

4.2 Unit-Level Incentives and Constraints

The Harper government's exceptionally robust and unambiguous response to the Ukrainian crisis was unusual. For one, the Harper government seemed to show little faith in the international institutions that were traditionally associated with Canadian foreign policy. The Harper government's response left some observers struggling for explanation. Like Australia, Canada is a 'Middle Power' that lacks geographical proximity to the crisis. Yet its response had more in common with the more muscular UK than it did with Australia. Canada's efforts were extraordinary in that they were comparable in scale and scope to those of a Great Power. Indeed,

¹ Martin Goldfarb, "Canada's Principled Foreign Policy: No More Honest Broker," *Policy Options* (2015): 11.

these efforts placed Canada at the forefront of the Status Quo Coalition's (hereafter SQC) response to the crisis. While activism at such a scale is rather unusual for Canada, the boldness of the government's rhetoric was even more so. Since the Harper government's new look foreign policy did not signal a sudden gain in Canadian power, how can its exceptionally robust response to the crisis be explained?

The seriousness of the crisis provides the first and most important clue. The Harper government's response reflected its understanding of the crisis, as well as the stakes involved. It viewed any erosion of the existing rule-based international order as a threat to Canadian security. As Steven E. Lobell suggests, neoclassical realism views foreign policy makers as "...situated at the intersection of domestic and international political systems."² From this perspective, leaders engage in a 'two-level game' by seeking to balance and manage interests and constraints located at the system- and unit-levels of analysis. This insight is of critical importance to the case at hand where there appears to be significant interplay between variables at all three levels of analysis.

The Harper government's brand of foreign policy tended to reflect the Conservative Party's distinct view of Canada and its role in the world. Mr. Harper's worldview was inseparable from that of his party or government. This creates some difficulty in untangling the influence of variables at the unit- and individual-levels of analysis given their significant interplay. Nevertheless, it is necessary to assess the determinative weight of unit-level incentives and constraints. The variables of interest include: Conservative strategic preferences, economic and trade interests, partisan political interests, and cultural values. According to NCR theory, these variables can condition how foreign policy makers assess threats, and shape the policy options they select in response.³ In certain cases, the absence or near-absence of certain constraints conditioned the shape and direction of Canadian policy in important ways.

4.3 Situating the Harper Government's Policy

The Harper government's foreign policies represented a departure from the more constrained foreign policies of previous governments with its emphasis on national interest. Jean-Christophe Boucher describes the Harper government's thinking as a form of 'Realist

² Steven E. Lobell, "Threat Assessments, the state, and foreign policy: a neoclassical realist model," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, ed. Norrin M. Ripsman and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2009), 56.

³ *Ibid.*, 43.

Internationalism.’⁴ While the government’s foreign policy was in a sense realist, what did this mean in practice? In contrast to the internationalism of past Canadian governments, the Harper government was focused on Canadian values, which were seen as inseparable from classical liberal democracy. Although concerned with power and security (*realpolitik*), the realism of the Harper government was to a large extent conditioned by its classical liberal values. This owes to Mr. Harper’s Reform Party roots.⁵

Both Liberal and traditional Progressive Conservative perspectives have long held that it is in Canada’s interests to defend the existing order because of the peace and stability it provides. However, the view of democracy promotion and human rights as strategically important in the cause of peace is a more recent development.⁶ Reform viewed the ‘human-rights-blind foreign policy’ that Canada pursued for most of the post-war period as an inadequate reflection of Canadian values. This perspective was rooted in the Reform Party’s ideological commitment to the freedom agenda, and an individualistic conceptualization of human rights. Reformers placed greater emphasis on individual freedom than Progressive Conservatives, who were associated with the more collectivist Tory tradition. In Western Canada, where populist conceptions of freedom were strong, Reform’s radical liberal conception of human rights gained support and traction.⁷ Stephen Harper brought a similar view of Canadian values into government, which, it was felt would increase Canada’s influence.⁸ The Harper Conservatives viewed assisting the

⁴ Jean-Christophe Boucher, “The Responsibility to Think Clearly About Interests,” in *Canada in the World: Internationalism in Canadian Foreign Policy*, ed. Heather A. Smith and ed. Claire T. Sjolander, (Don Mills: Oxford U P, 2013), 56-7.

⁵ The Reform Party was critical of the direction of Canadian foreign policy under both Liberal and Progressive Conservative governments. It viewed both parties as perpetuating a foreign policy orientation that did not adequately reflect the full spectrum of Canada’s values. See Reform Party of Canada, “Platform & Statement of Principles,” (1989), 25, https://www.poltext.org/sites/poltext.org/files/plateformes/can1989r_plt_en_12072011_125440.pdf.

⁶ While this trend has lessened in the post-Cold War era, Bruce Gilley nonetheless suggests that Canada has “...for most of its postwar history...[pursued]...a ‘largely human-rights-blind foreign policy’ even if it defended liberal principles in general.” See Bruce Gilley, “Middle Powers During Great Power Transitions: China’s Rise and the Future of Canada-US Relations,” *International Journal* 66 no. 2 (Spring 2011): 258; and Adam Chapnick, “Peace, Order, and Good Government: The “conservative” Tradition in Canadian Foreign Policy,” *International Journal* 60 no. 3 (June 2005): 640.

⁷ The nature and significance of Western Canadian values are discussed at greater length in Chapter 5. The Harper government embraced a more radical form of conservatism (in the international relations sense of the term) in part because it embraced a more radical, and indeed, American style of liberalism. See Chapnick, “Peace, Order, and Good Government,” 646-50.

⁸ From Mr. Harper’s perspective, “...*Canada’s greatest asset on the international stage is our unique relationship with the United States* – the fact that we just happen to share values and interests with the world’s sole superpower.” (Italics in original) Stephen Harper quoted in Justin Massie and Stephane Roussel, Stephane, “The Twilight of Internationalism? Neocontinentalism as an Emerging Dominant Idea in Canadian Foreign Policy,” in *Canada in the World: Internationalism in Canadian Foreign Policy*, ed. Heather A. Smith and Claire T. Sjolander (Don Mills:

American System Leader (hereafter SL) with its project of spreading liberal values and democracy as a means of adding additional stability to the existing order.⁹ This strategic preference was reinforced by an ideological commitment to these ends.

In addition to its more radical liberalism, the Harper government's perspective was unusually pessimistic, reflecting its view of the world as a dangerous place.¹⁰ It was a perspective that echoed the realist understanding of the relationship between power and world order, which reinforced the Conservative belief that system stability would ultimately depend on American leadership.¹¹ This distinct blend of conservative *realpolitik* and Enlightenment liberal idealism set the Harper government apart from its immediate predecessors, and strengthened Canadian followership status throughout the Harper period.¹²

4.3.1 Towards A Conservative Internationalist Foreign Policy

There were few outward signs that the Harper government ever shared the status quo bias that has long been a defining if seldom recognized feature of the Canadian foreign policy discourse.¹³ As the Harper government's vigorous response to the crisis suggested, Mr. Harper took seriously the risks associated with disorderly systemic change. Since the end of the Cold War, the Canadian foreign policy discourse had little to say about the prospects of disorderly change or Canada's interest in system defense. The main concern centered on what could be done to improve the existing order. This was because the stability of this order had until recently been assumed *a priori* by Canadian governments. Having determined that Russia's actions posed a threat to stability of the liberal world order, the Harper government began reorienting Canadian

Oxford U P, 2013), 48; and Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, "Statement By the Prime Minister of Canada In Toronto," (Ottawa: PMO, May 30, 2014). PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

⁹ One Harper government minister argued that democracy promotion "...advances Canada's interests because it offers the best chance for long-term stability, prosperity, and the protection of human rights." For original quote see Jonathan Paquin and Philippe Beauregard, "Shedding Light on Canada's Foreign Policy Alignment," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 46 no. 3 (September 2013): 633.

¹⁰ Paul Wells, "Why Harper wants to take on the world," *Macleans*, July 25, 2011, <http://www.macleans.ca/uncategorized/why-harper-wants-to-take-on-the-world/>.

¹¹ FactPointVideo, "Stephen Harper: Trump will 'reverse the cornerstone of 7 decades of American foreign policy,'" Youtube video, January 19, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvOqaVWYe4>.

¹² Massie and Roussel explain the Harper government's strong support for the United States with reference to what they call 'neocontinentalism'; an emergent dominant idea in Canadian foreign policy that they suggest is rooted in the rise of a Canadian variant of neoconservatism. Canadian neoconservatives are said to possess "...an unqualified belief in the benefits and benevolence of US hegemony." For a discussion of 'neocontinentalism' and neoconservatism, see Massie and Roussel, "The Twilight," 36-49.

¹³ Tsyoshi Kawasaki, "Formulating Canada's Grand Strategy in Asia," *International Journal* 51, no. 1 (December 2000): 138.

policy towards system-defense. For the first time in the post-Cold War era, a Canadian foreign policy maker concluded that system stability could no longer be taken for granted.

Prior to the Ukraine crisis, the Harper government maintained some degree of confidence in the stability of existing order. Nonetheless, Mr. Harper understood that things could be otherwise. In 2011, Paul Wells suggested that Mr. Harper was preoccupied with threats.¹⁴ The emergence of the Ukrainian crisis in 2014 reinforced this preoccupation. At this juncture, Canada emerged as an unambiguous voice of support for Ukraine and a harsh critic of Russia's aggressive foreign policy. Mr. Harper viewed Canada as a 'fighting country' with a strong interest in promoting its values and defending the liberal order.¹⁵ This might be termed 'conservative internationalism,' which reflects both a distinctly Conservative understanding of the existing liberal order and an ideologically motivated desire to preserve it.¹⁶ These factors informed the Harper government's strategic preferences, setting it apart from previous governments. These preferences were greatly informed by Mr. Harper's view of history and Canada's role in the world, which played an outsized role in conditioning the shape and direction of Canadian foreign policy throughout the Harper era.¹⁷

4.4 The Harper Government's Assistance to Ukraine

Russia's aggression against Ukraine brought the nature of Canada's interests into sharper focus. As the crisis deepened, Canada began pursuing its interests in Ukraine with more urgency than it had at any point since 1991. This reflected the recognition within the Harper government that the rationale for subordinating Canada's Ukraine policy to a Russia-first policy had evaporated.¹⁸ This determination contributed to the government's redoubling of Canada's

¹⁴ Wells, "Why Harper wants to take on the world."

¹⁵ Jeremy Keehn, "Stephen Harper, the Ottawa Attack, and the Question of Canadian Security," *The New Yorker*, October 23, 2014, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/stephen-harper-question-canadian-security>.

¹⁶ As Boucher suggests, "...the concept of internationalism encompasses three necessary and jointly sufficient conditions: (1) multilateralism, (2) a sense of responsibility towards international affairs, and (3) respect for the international rule of law." See Boucher, "The Responsibility to Think Clearly About Interests," 56-7.

¹⁷ The differences between the Harper government foreign policy and the policies pursued by its predecessors were most noticeable at the declaratory level. Mr. Harper's exceptionally robust and ideologically shaded rhetoric represented a clear departure from any recent government, whether Liberal or Conservative. This departure reflected the differences between Conservative elites during the Harper era, and the governing elites of the previous period. The ideology and strategic preferences of Conservative elites are discussed in greater depth beginning in Chapter 5.

¹⁸ The evaporation of this rationale no doubt played a role in limiting any potential bureaucratic pushback that may have emanated from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Development and Trade. For a description of this rationale, see Bohdan Kordan, "Canadian-Ukrainian Relations: Articulating the Canadian Interest," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 20 (January 1996): 131.

commitment to Ukraine and a renewal of the historical ‘Special Relationship’ between the two countries. The expansion of Canada’s traditional commitment to providing economic, technical, and political assistance to Ukraine signaled an unwavering commitment to defending the existing order. Canada had a strong incentive towards expanding the scope of its efforts to include providing direct security assistance to Ukraine. Canada and other leading NATO Powers responded to this incentive by providing Ukraine with a limited amount of ‘non-lethal’ security aid. This assistance made explicit what had been the implicit goals of previous Canadian policy; namely, bringing mutual security interests to the forefront of the Canada-Ukraine relationship. This new and more direct approach to supporting Ukrainian security was first and foremost meant to strengthen the SQC’s overall response to Russia’s increasingly aggressive regional behavior. For the Harper government, it became a higher priority than maintaining good relations with Russia.

4.4.1 Political Support for Ukraine

The Harper government signaled Canada’s strong political support for post-Maidan Ukraine, in a number of ways. The government, for example, relied on symbolic actions to publically convey Canada’s support for the fledgling pro-Western government in Kyiv and its opposition to Russia. These included a series of high profile visits by Canadian leaders to Ukraine and by Ukrainian leaders to Canada; Mr. Harper being the first leader of a G7 country to visit Ukraine shortly after the Maidan.¹⁹ A corollary to the Harper government’s uncompromising support for Ukraine was its equally uncompromising opposition to Mr. Putin’s agenda. In a face-to-face encounter that occurred on the sidelines of the Brisbane G20 Summit in November 2014, Prime Minister Harper had a clear message for Mr. Putin, telling the Russian president that he needed to “...get out of Ukraine.”²⁰ The unambiguous tone of Mr. Harper’s demand was characteristic of his government’s overall approach to the crisis.

¹⁹ Lee-Anne Goodman, "Stephen Harper In Kyiv As First G7 Leader To Visit Ukraine," *Huffington Post*, March 22, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/03/22/stephen-harper-ukraine_n_5012075.html; and Mike Blanchfield, "Ukraine’s President thanks Canada for unwavering support in speech at joint session of Parliament," *National Post*, September 17, 2014, <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/canadian-politics/ukraines-president-thanks-canada-for-unwavering-support-in-speech-at-joint-session-of-parliament>.

²⁰ Steven Chase, "Harper tells Putin to 'get out of Ukraine' in G20 encounter," *Globe & Mail*, November 14, 2014, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/harper-and-g20-leaders-confront-putin-problem-at-australia-meet/article21603599/>.

During and between state visits, the Harper government voiced unequivocal support for Ukraine's rights as a sovereign nation. Over an eighteen-month period beginning in February 2014, the Harper government unleashed a flurry of statements, speeches, and policy announcements. These included statements of congratulation in recognition of Ukraine's parliamentary elections in 2014.²¹ Such statements took on additional meaning in the context of the crisis. These signaled that Canada recognized the Ukrainian government as wholly legitimate – even if Mr. Putin did not. Canada's extensive bilateral diplomatic engagement with Ukraine, in fact helped to establish a public case against Mr. Putin's claims that there was "...nobody to talk to" in Kyiv.²² Canadian engagement demonstrated that there was, in fact, a functioning government in Kyiv.

Such a demonstration helped to undercut the plausibility of Russia's publically offered pretext for intervening in Ukraine's domestic affairs. It was not enough to merely offer an alternative to Russia's interpretation of both the situation in Ukraine and the wider security dilemma. It was in the SQC's interests to discredit and push back against Russia's narrative. To this end, Minister Nicholson denounced Russia for its attempt to use World Trade Organization mechanisms to gain legitimacy for its aggression against Ukraine.²³ Canada and other Status Quo Powers had a situational interest in ensuring the conservative definition of the security dilemma remained ascendant. The Harper government's approach to defending and propagating a sophisticated pro-Western definition of the security dilemma was entirely consistent with Canada's conservative interests.²⁴ Despite this interest-based approach, the government nonetheless explained its position with reference to Canadian values. This was pragmatic given the government's strategic interest in mobilizing public support behind its policies. Canadians identified closely with the set of values embedded in the post-Cold War order. Appealing to these

²¹ Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, "STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA ON THE RESULTS OF THE UKRAINIAN ELECTIONS," (Ottawa: PMO, May 27, 2014); and Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, "STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA ON THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN UKRAINE," (Ottawa: PMO, October 26, 2014), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

²² The Kremlin, "Address by President of the Russian Federation," *President of Russia*, March 18, 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>.

²³ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "Canada Denounces Russian Stunt at WTO," (Ottawa: DFATD, July 2, 2015), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

²⁴ The term 'conservative' as it is used here refers to Canada's interest in preserving the resources already under its control and the benefits it receives through the maintenance of the existing liberal order, including security and access to foreign markets. As Denis Stairs suggests, "...order is a conservative value and Canada is a conveniently located, property-rich state. That being so, it has no interests that acquisitive acts of disorder can serve." For a further discussion, see Denis Stairs, "Challenges and opportunities for Canadian foreign policy in the Paul Martin era," *International Journal* 58, no. 4 (Autumn 2003): 497-8.

values assisted the government in mobilizing public support behind its policies, which both strengthened and legitimated its response to the Ukrainian crisis.

In an important foreign policy speech, Foreign Minister Baird described the Harper government's view of Canada's role in the world. Mr. Baird portrayed a foreign policy governed by a sense of moral clarity. He suggested that Canadian foreign policy should promote Canadian values and "...actively bat for the side of what's right." As the foreign minister explained, "Every ship needs a compass."²⁵ Canadian values, from Mr. Baird's perspective, provided such a compass. There was more than a hint of pride in these remarks. From Mr. Baird's vantage point, it was not a coincidence that Canada had repeatedly found itself on the right side of history. His core message was that Canadians, because of their values, could be relied on to get "the big questions right."

On March 3, 2014, only days into the crisis, Prime Minister Harper informed Canadians via Twitter that Ukraine's national flag was, at that very moment, being flown on Parliament Hill.²⁶ Given that there was a military dimension to the crisis, the importance of this gesture could not be minimized. In a moment of deep uncertainty, Canada sent a decisive signal of its support for Ukraine. The gesture communicated a deeper point about the Harper government's understanding of the security dilemma. The immediate problem from its perspective was not Russia's feelings of insecurity versus Ukraine or the West. Rather, the problem was Russia's increasingly aggressive foreign policy. Whatever was to come, Russia's actions were unacceptable and Canada stood with Ukraine against the aggressor.

4.4.2 Economic Support

As the crisis deepened, the Harper government took a number of steps aimed at bringing stability to the Ukrainian economy. Towards this end, the government re-affirmed Ukraine's status as a country of focus and listed Ukraine as a 'Priority Country' under the Global Markets and Action Plan.²⁷ In terms of direct support, the government provided some \$578 million in

²⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "Address by Minister Baird at Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada Headquarters," (Ottawa: DFATD, March 27, 2014), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

²⁶ Steven Chase, "Ukraine's flag flown on Parliament Hill," *Globe & Mail*, March 4, 2014, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/ukraines-flag-flown-on-parliament-hill/article17269823/>.

²⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "Canada reaffirms its Support to Ukraine," (Ottawa: DFATD, August 5, 2014), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project; and Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development

direct assistance to Ukraine, including humanitarian aid valued at \$18 million. The government also extended two separate \$200 million low-interest loans to Ukraine.²⁸ Concurrently, the government took steps toward expanding bi-lateral trade ties with Ukraine, conducting a number of trade missions over the course of 2014-15. In January 2015, it was announced that Canada and Ukraine had resumed negotiations toward a bilateral free trade agreement.²⁹ In 2015, the Harper government also announced it would partner with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to support the Partnership for Local Economic Development and Democratic Governance project. The overarching goal of these efforts was to assist Ukraine in offsetting the destabilizing effects of Russia's hybrid-warfare campaign and support economic growth.³⁰

4.4.3 Technical Support

Within the context of the crisis, Ukraine's government was more pro-Western than past governments. This development afforded Canada with new opportunities to support the domestic reforms process in Ukraine. In light of this, the Harper government increased Canadian assistance for reforms. While such support was in keeping with Canada's historical commitment to Ukraine, the Harper government's effort was animated by a new sense of urgency. The government partnered with a range of civil society actors to deliver specialized forms of technical assistance and expertise. It also backed a number of new initiatives aimed at supporting electoral, educational and judicial reforms, policing and economic reforms as well as other efforts. The government, for example, provided \$2.9 million in funding to the National Democratic Institute in support of the NGO's efforts to support election-financing reforms in Ukraine.³¹ Domestic reforms would be critical to Ukraine's long-term security. However, such efforts in the short-

Canada, "Canada supporting entrepreneurs in Ukraine," (Ottawa: DFATD, August 15, 2014), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

²⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "Canada Reaffirms Support For Economic Development and Democratic Governance in Ukraine," (Ottawa: DFATD, April 28, 2015), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

²⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "Renewed Negotiations Toward a Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement to Promote Growth and Prosperity in Ukraine," (Ottawa: DFATD, January 26, 2015), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project; The resulting agreement, known as the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA), was concluded and implemented under the Prime Minister Trudeau's Liberal government.

³⁰ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "The Government of Canada's Response to the Situation in Ukraine," (Ottawa: DFATD, December 19, 2014), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

³¹ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "Minister Nicholson Announces Support for Ukrainian Democracy," (Ottawa: DFATD, March 18, 2015), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

term did little to ensure the country's capacity to shield itself against Russia's destabilizing influence and aggression.

4.4.4 Canada's Support for the SQC Diplomatic Agenda Amidst The Crisis

While the Harper government recognized that it was in the national interest to expand Canada's assistance to Ukraine following Russia's aggression, it also recognized that Canada could only do so much on its own. The success of the Harper government's efforts ultimately depended upon the unity of the SQC and the success of the broader coalition agenda. Given Canada's conservative interests and the stakes involved with the Ukrainian crisis, the Harper government had a strong interest in lending its unequivocal support to the US-led SQC's pro-Ukraine agenda.

The Harper government imposed punitive economic and political sanctions on a large number of individuals and entities linked to Russia's aggression in Ukraine. In early 2015, Jason Kenney, a senior cabinet minister, argued that Canada had gone further with sanctions than had either the US or the EU.³² Canada's sanctions regime was constructed on a piecemeal basis, and strengthened gradually in response to Russia's aggression and non-compliance. During the initial stages of the crisis, the Harper government imposed sanctions only against those individuals and entities with direct ties to Russia's aggression in Ukraine. By December 2014 Canada had expanded its sanctions regime to begin targeting entire sections of the Russian economy. These 'sectoral sanctions' were directed at Russia's largely state-controlled energy extraction and exploration sector.³³ Frequently, Canada acted in conjunction with the US and its EU partners. That Canada was acting with its friends and allies was consistently emphasized in most of the Harper government's Ukraine-related communications.

This did not reflect some special commitment to multilateralism. Rather, the government viewed multilateralism as merely the best available means to securing Canada's interests. Moreover, not all of Canada's actions were adopted on a purely multilateral basis. The Harper government took unilateral steps towards limiting Canada's engagement with Russia as a form of

³² House of Commons Debates, 41st Parl, 2nd Sess, Vol 147, No 203 (April 29, 2015) At 1947-2347.

³³ Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, "Restrictions on Technologies used in Russia's Oil Exploration and Extractive Sector," (Ottawa: PMO, December 19, 2014), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

political sanction.³⁴ Canada also responded much later than the United States and Europe in imposing sectoral sanctions targeting Russia's energy industry.³⁵ This difference in timing provided some evidence that unit-level constraints conditioned the government's behavior. While the Harper government recognized the utility of sanctions, it felt justified in attempting to shield commercial interests from harm, at least to a certain point.³⁶

4.4.5 Canada's Support for Ukraine Through NATO and the OSCE

In the months following the onset of the crisis, the Harper government began providing direct security assistance to Ukraine. This assistance started in earnest in August 2014 when Canada began delivering shipments of non-lethal military aid to Ukraine.³⁷ These shipments included quantities of thermal goggles, emergency medical kits, cold weather field kit, ballistic vests, radio equipment, a mobile field hospital structure, and explosive ordinance disposal equipment.³⁸ The Harper government also took the unusual step of furnishing Ukraine with a limited degree of access to Canadian geospatial intelligence for territorial defense purposes.³⁹ The most notable aspect of Canada's security assistance was the deployment of 200 Canadian Forces trainers to Ukraine as a part of NATO's Operation Unifier, beginning in April 2015. By contrast, the United Kingdom deployed seventy-five trainers, while the US deployed 800 trainers.⁴⁰ Canada also contributed air and naval assets in support of NATO's Operation Reassurance, a mission intended to both reassure Eastern European and Baltic allies and deter Russia from

³⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "Canada Takes Principled Stand on Arctic Council Meetings," (Ottawa: DFATD, April 15, 2014), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project; and Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, "STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA ON THE SITUATION IN UKRAINE," (Ottawa: PMO, March 4, 2014), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

³⁵ Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, "The Government of Canada's Response to the Situation in Ukraine," (Ottawa: PMO, December 19th, 2014), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

³⁶ As Robert Gilpin suggests, leaders pursue multiple objectives simultaneously and employ 'satisficing strategies', which seek to balance a number of often-competing interests. See Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, (NYC: Cambridge U P, 2009), 20.

³⁷ Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, "Statement by the Prime Minister of Canada Announcing Security Assistance to Ukraine," (Ottawa: PMO, August 7, 2014), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

³⁸ Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, "PM ANNOUNCES NEW CANADIAN MILITARY CONTRIBUTION IN UKRAINE," (Ottawa: PMO, April 14, 2015), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project; and Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "Minister Nicholson Announces New Support for Ukraine's Armed Forces, Canada Delivers Nonlethal Military Equipment," (Ottawa: DFATD, May 9, 2015), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

³⁹ David Pugliese, "Ukraine gets access to Canadian satellite data that our own defence department can't afford," *National Post*, April 8, 2015, <http://nationalpost.com/news/ukraine-gets-access-to-canadian-satellite-data-that-our-own-defence-department-cant-afford/wcm/6907c0d2-71fb-4d43-a5c2-ad08e54e80dc>.

⁴⁰ Lysiane Gagnon, "Our risky game in Ukraine," *Globe & Mail*, April 23, 2015, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/our-risky-game-in-ukraine/article24072188/>.

taking further aggressive action. The Harper government's outsized support for Operation Unifier and Operation Reassurance placed Canada at the forefront of NATO's efforts to enhance the SQC's defensive collective security posture versus Russia.

The Harper government also supported OSCE-led monitoring initiatives in Ukraine, including a number of electoral observer missions and the Special Monitoring Mission. The election observer missions were conducted under the aegis of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and, separately, under the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. In addition to these missions, the Harper government conducted bilateral election observer mission. The Special Monitoring Mission was tasked with the dangerous work of monitoring and reporting on compliance with the ceasefire provisions of the Minsk agreements. The Harper government seemed to have had little interest in the OSCE's work prior to the crisis.⁴¹ Nonetheless, Canada contributed both personnel and financial support to OSCE-led missions.⁴² The Harper government evidently came to appreciate the value of the organization's work in the context of the Ukrainian crisis.

4.5 Incentives and Constraints at the Unit-Level of Analysis

4.5.1 Economic Interests

Canada's support for the SQC's sanctions regime against Russia came at a price to Canadian commercial interests. As the Harper government recognized, the Canadian national interest was not merely the aggregate interest of Canadian business. While the Harper government was pro-business and pro-trade, its highest priority, in the final analysis, was serving Canada's security interests. As the prime minister explained, "...We don't like seeing any disruption to investment or markets or trade, but looking at it from the point of view of the greater national interest, an occupation of one country of another has serious long-term

⁴¹ A 2016 press report suggested that the Harper government had, prior to the Ukrainian crisis, considered withdrawing Canada from the OSCE. See Mike Blanchfield, "Harper wanted to pull out of European security organization, diplomats say," *CBC News*, February 1, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/harper-europe-security-agency-1.3428747>; and Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "Canada Announces Support for Free and Fair Elections in Ukraine," (Ottawa: DFATD, September 16, 2014) PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

⁴² Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, "Minister Nicholson Announces Additional Contributions to OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine," (Ottawa: DFATD, March 27, 2015) PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

implications.”⁴³ According to Mr. Harper, Canada’s support for the sanctions regime would, in the long run, be worth the short-term cost to Canadian energy firms. While the Harper government was interested in protecting Canadian commercial interests, its support for imposing and maintaining the regime was nonetheless the strongest among the G7 states.⁴⁴ This was due, in part, to the fact that Canada’s relatively limited commercial ties with Russia reduced the economic costs associated with pursuing a robust and confrontational response to Russia’s aggressive policies. Moreover, the limited economic costs associated with pursuing these hardline policies limited the prospects for domestic political blowback.

The situational absence of strong political constraints helps to explain the government’s decision to impose sectorial sanctions on Russia. Compared to European countries like Germany and France, which both have stronger commercial ties with Russia, Mr. Harper faced relatively few domestic political and economic constraints. As a result, Mr. Harper was free to pursue Canada’s interests. This freedom from unit-level constraints allowed an incentivized response to develop in a more optimal manner than European powers like Germany and France. However, Canada’s limited commercial ties Russia reduced the potential impact of Canadian sanctions.⁴⁵

4.5.2 ‘Diaspora Politics’ or an Interest-based Partnership?

With some 1,250,000 of its citizens tracing their ancestral heritage back to Ukraine, Canada is home to the third largest Ukrainian population in the world. This fact has led some – including Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov – to assert the Harper government’s robust response to the crisis was politically motivated.⁴⁶ Given the extent to which the Harper

⁴³ Ligaya, Armina. "Pain caused by sanctions on Russia for 'greater national interest,' Stephen Harper tells business leaders." *Financial Post*. March 24, 2014, <http://business.financialpost.com/news/economy/russia-stephen-harper-business/wcm/f8527f78-7b01-44bc-99f6-44755a67cef5>.

⁴⁴ Steven Chase, "Harper takes leading role in G7 against Russia," *Globe & Mail*, March 4, 2014, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/harper-takes-leading-role-in-g7-against-russia/article17727891/>; and Mike Blanchfield, "Stephen Harper lands in Kyiv as Ukraine pushes for more G7 sanctions on Russia," *CBC News*, June 5, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/stephen-harper-lands-in-kyiv-as-ukraine-pushes-for-more-g7-sanctions-on-russia-1.3102111>.

⁴⁵ The assessment of the role played by commercial interests presented here is very much a preliminary one, which considers economic factors mainly in relation to other variables. Any future analysis of the Harper government’s post-Maidan Ukraine policy would benefit from a deeper accounting of Canada’s economic interests in Ukraine and Russia. This would contribute to a greater understanding of the role these interests played in shaping Canada’s response to the crisis.

⁴⁶ John Ibbitson, "Harper's foreign policy: Ukraine and the Diaspora vote," *Centre for International Governance Innovation*, March 19, 2014, <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/harpers-foreign-policy-ukraine-and-diaspora-vote>; and David Pugliese, "Harper Government Response On Ukraine Just Bluster, Say Former Ambassadors – Canada Increasingly Marginalized On World Stage," *Ottawa Citizen*, March 1, 2014,

government's partisan political interests aligned with systemic-incentives, which were not universally recognized, such assertions were seemingly unavoidable.⁴⁷ Because of this alignment, the Harper government's support for Ukraine did not run contrary to Canada's interests. Thus, it was not suboptimal, as politicized foreign policies tend to be. The Harper government's approach was, by all indications, premised on its sophisticated understanding of the security dilemma. Its engagement with Ukrainian-Canadian organized community assisted in mobilizing civil society actors in furthering the Harper government's multifaceted response to the crisis. This strategy capitalized on the strong ties between Ukrainian-Canadians and their ancestral homeland. It also encouraged volunteer support for Ukraine. Such an ad-hoc partnership with civil society served as a force multiplier for Canadian soft power, which bolstered the government's mobilization capacity and amplified the Harper government's message. Here too, the government's policy served Canada's security interest by increasing the amount of material support to Ukraine. The Harper government's recognition of the system-level imperatives associated with the Ukrainian crisis offered the most compelling explanation for its unusual response to the crisis. Explanations centered on the Harper government's partisan political motives either underemphasized the strength of such imperatives, or failed to recognize them altogether.⁴⁸

In 2014-15, Canada's support for Ukraine was largely a non-partisan issue. Strategic disagreements aside, elected members of each party agreed that Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine were unacceptable.⁴⁹ Despite some differences in rhetoric, there was, as Michael Den

<http://ottawacitizen.com/g00/news/national/defence-watch/harper-government-response-on-ukraine-just-bluster-say-former-ambassadors-canada-increasingly-marginalized-on-world-stage>; and Steven Chase, "Ukrainian politician warns Ottawa not to resume ties with Russia," *Globe & Mail*, February 23, 2016, <https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/leading-ukrainian-politician-warns-canada-not-to-resume-ties-with-russia/article28850712/?ref=>.

⁴⁷ The Harper government's reputation for engaging in what Tom Flanagan termed a 'permanent campaign' no doubt reinforced perceptions of a politically motivated post-Maidan Ukraine policy. See Flanagan, Tom, *Harper's Team: Behind the Scenes in the Conservative Rise to Power*, (Montreal: McGill-Queens UP, 2009): 316.

⁴⁸ It should also be noted that such explanations are problematic for other reasons. The 'diaspora vote' narrative tends to overstate the potential political benefits of appealing to Ukrainian-Canadians. While a small number of so-called 'swing ridings' are in fact home to significant populations of Ukrainian-Canadians, there is little evidence to support the contention that the diaspora votes as a monolithic bloc in support of whatever party is perceived of as being the most pro-Ukrainian. See Bohdan S. Kordan, "Between Friends: Canada-Ukraine Relations from Independence to the Euromaidan," (forthcoming).

⁴⁹ For a helpful discussion on the strategic differences that existed between Canadian political parties, see Aya Fujiwara, "Canada's Response to Euromaidan," in *Ukraine's Euromaidan: Analyses of a Civil Revolution*, ed. David R. Marples and ed. Frederick V. Mills, (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2015), 205-8.

Tant suggests, "...no material divergence between the government and any opposition party."⁵⁰ Neither Canada's support for Ukraine, nor its opposition to Russia was in contention. Indeed, there was a remarkable all-party consensus around the issue of Canada's support for Ukraine. While the Harper government's overall response to the crisis enjoyed strong public support, there was no indication that partisan political interests were a significant determinant of the Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis.⁵¹

4.6 Conclusion

Thus far the Harper government's behavior has been characterized as a pragmatic response to the most serious geopolitical crisis of the post-Cold War era, enabled in part by an absence of strong unit-level constraints. However, the interest-based explanation provided still seems rather mechanistic. This is because the discussion has not yet adequately accounted for the role that ideas and individual agency played in conditioning the shape and direction of the Harper government's response to the crisis. Canada's Ukraine policy may have looked very different had another party or a different prime minister been in power. To understand the Ukraine policy that did emerge, it is necessary to consider the role of the principal foreign policy maker – Mr. Harper himself. The next chapter will examine a number of unit- and individual-level variables that shaped Mr. Harper's threat assessments and policy preferences. The discussion will assess how Mr. Harper's worldview, life experience, and ideology conditioned his government's response to the crisis, and demonstrate that such factors carried far more determinative weight than unit-level incentives and constraints.

⁵⁰ Michael Den Tandt, "Michael Den Tandt: Old foreign- policy nostrums of Canada as 'honest broker' not just dead, but buried," *National Post*, July 20, 2014, <http://nationalpost.com/opinion/michael-den-tandt-old-foreign-policy-nostrums-of-canada-as-honest-broker-not-just-dead-but-buried/wcm/add89f1b-51f5-4c83-a499-7ed1c027230b>.

⁵¹ Sonja Puzic, "Canadians back PM's Ukraine support, but split over fighting Islamic State: poll," *CTV News*, September 4, 2014, <http://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/canadians-back-pm-s-ukraine-support-but-split-over-fighting-islamic-state-poll-1.1992242>.

Chapter 5: Harper, Ukraine and Ideas: Individual Agency, and the unLaurentian Consensus

5.1 Introduction

As prime minister, Mr. Harper held a tight grip over his party and government; so much so that is somewhat difficult to discern where Stephen Harper stopped and the Conservative Party began.¹ The Harper government's foreign policy agenda was by and large Mr. Harper's agenda. For nearly a decade, Mr. Harper's policy preferences and worldview conditioned the shape and direction of Canadian foreign policy. As Adam Chapnick suggests, Canadian foreign policy tends to be rather conservative regardless of who is in power.² This reflects, more than anything, the nature of Canada's interests as a Status Quo Power (hereafter SQP). This should not be taken to suggest that Canadian policy would be the same no matter who was in power. Under the same circumstances, two different individuals may render divergent threat assessments and select different strategies. To understand the Harper government's foreign policy response to the crisis in Ukraine, it is necessary to understand who Mr. Harper is and what he believes.

In the Canadian context, Mr. Harper's post-Maidan Ukraine policy was unusually conservative. This marked an important shift in the style of Canada's post-Cold War international engagement. The Harper government's Ukraine policy was not the policy of a SQP – it was the policy of a 'doggedly' SQP. Having identified Russia's revisionist foreign policy as a threat, the Harper government came to view Ukraine as a critical venue for system defense. This is the primary reason for the Harper government's robust response to the crisis. System stability did not seem to be a major concern for the Harper government prior to 2014 and the Maidan. The Harper government's change in posture reflected a change in circumstance. In order to fully understand this, it is necessary to consider certain factors at the individual level of analysis. These factors relate to Mr. Harper's worldview, which shaped his threat assessments and policy preferences in

¹ John Ibbitson, *Stephen Harper*, (New York: Signal, 2016): 234.

² Adam Chapnick, "Peace, Order, and Good Government: The "conservative" Tradition in Canadian Foreign Policy," *International Journal* 60 no. 3 (June 2005): 640.

important ways. Indeed, certain components of Mr. Harper's worldview played a significant role in conditioning Canada's response to the crisis. This chapter, therefore, is concerned with the following questions: how did Mr. Harper view the world? Why did he view the world in this way? And how did this worldview condition Canada's foreign policy response to the crisis in Ukraine?

5.2 Mr. Harper's Worldview

Mr. Harper's worldview incorporates a mixture of ideas associated with Burkean Conservatism and Enlightenment Liberalism that informed the shape and direction of Canadian foreign policy throughout his tenure.³ Mr. Harper conceived of Canadian history in terms of the broader history of human civilization.⁴ In this regard, Canada has been party to a continuous fight to advance and defend a set of liberal principles, including: freedom, rule of law, democracy, human rights, and national self-determination.⁵ Mr. Harper's worldview remained remarkably consistent over time. The exogenous shocks of the past decades cemented his convictions and deepened his moral certitude. These included the end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Empire; the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States; and the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. Finally, there was Russia's military aggression against Ukraine in 2014. Russia's increasing aggressive behavior had led Robert Kagan to suggest, "History has returned."⁶ Faced with this reality, Mr. Harper as prime minister frequently described the world as dangerous and threatening.⁷ This preoccupation reflected the significant interplay between Mr.

³ Ken Boessenkool and Sean Speer, "Ordered Liberty: How Harper's Philosophy Transformed Canada for the Better," *Policy Options* (December, 2015), <http://policyoptions.irpp.org/2015/12/01/harper/>.

⁴ Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, "Prime Minister Stephen Harper addresses the House of Commons in a reply to the Speech from the Throne," (Ottawa: PMO, October 17, 2007). PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

⁵ Paul Wells, "How he sees Canada's role in the world and where he wants to take the country," *Macleans*, July 11, 2011; and John Ibbitson, "With freedom eroding in Ukraine, PM puts his principles to work," *Globe & Mail*, October 26, 2010, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/with-freedom-eroding-in-ukraine-pm-puts-his-principles-to-work/article4330293/>; and Jeremy Keehn, "Stephen Harper, the Ottawa Attack, and the Question of Canadian Security," *The New Yorker*, October 23, 2014, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/stephen-harper-question-canadian-security>; and Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, "Prime Minister Harper's remarks at a reception in honour of Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek," (Ottawa: PMO, February 29, 2008), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project; and Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, "Prime Minister Harper congratulates former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney on award at Ukrainian tribute dinner," (Ottawa: PMO, April 18, 2007), PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

⁶ Robert Kagan, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*, (New York: Vintage, 2009), 4.

⁷ Paul Wells, "Why Harper wants to take on the world," *Macleans*, July 25, 2011, <http://www.macleans.ca/uncategorized/why-harper-wants-to-take-on-the-world/>.

Harper's threat assessments, policy preferences, and worldview. The exogenous shocks simply reinforced Mr. Harper's realism without tempering his idealism.

Mr. Harper's worldview was quite unlike that of any of his predecessors.⁸ He viewed politics as a competition between ideologies, as some did during the Cold War.⁹ Like Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and George W. Bush, Mr. Harper considered some ideologies as inherently evil and embedded in international politics.¹⁰ The importance of this was that it conditioned Mr. Harper's threat assessments and policy preferences.¹¹ A few scholars and other observers have described this perspective as 'black and white' or 'Manichean.'¹² While Mr. Harper's embrace of moral universalism have led some to conclude that he was a neoconservative, this association has done little to further an understanding about his foreign policy decisions. The term 'neoconservative,' as applied to Mr. Harper, was typically meant to be a pejorative.¹³

Mr. Harper's embrace of certain assumptions about the importance of American power reflected his realistic view of power. While neoconservatives certainly perceive American power as central to system stability, some neoliberals make similar assumptions about the relationship between American power and world order.¹⁴ While many of Mr. Harper's views were consistent

⁸ Chapnick describes certain trends in post-Cold War conservative foreign policy thinking as 'unCanadian' – a euphemism for American. See Chapnick, "Peace, Order, and Good Government," 650.

⁹ Ibbitson, *Stephen Harper*, 36.

¹⁰ According to Mr. Harper, Conservatives "...understand that the great geopolitical battles against modern tyrants are battles over values." See Paul Wells, *The Longer I'm Prime Minister: Stephen Harper and Canada, 2006-*, (Toronto: Random House, 2013), 60.

¹¹ Mr. Harper's foreign policies were informed by his strong support for like-minded democracies like Israel, the United States, and the United Kingdom, as well as strong opposition to illiberal regimes of various stripes, including Iran and Venezuela. This contributed to a convivial relationship between Canada and Israel during the Harper era, and confrontational policies towards Venezuela, Iran, and Hezbollah -- an Iranian proxy. While some have argued that Mr. Harper's Middle Eastern policies were pursued for partisan political reasons, the domestic political incentive towards pursuing a confrontational policy towards a country like Venezuela is less obvious. It is difficult to identify any domestic political incentive for adopting such an approach to Canadian-Venezuelan relations, which mirrored the government's hardline positions on Iran. This suggests Mr. Harper's general preference for confronting illiberal states was not born of political calculation. This preference is better explained in relation to the prime minister's radically liberal worldview.

¹² The ideological rigidity of Mr. Harper's worldview is one that most clearly differentiates him from his predecessors. As Norman Hillmer has suggested, "Stephen Harper was markedly different from the Canadian leaders who came before him". See Norman Hillmer, "Concluding Thoughts: The Prime Minister of the Few," in *The Harper Era in Canadian Foreign Policy: Parliament, Politics, and Canada's Global Posture*, ed. Adam Chapnick and Christopher J. Kukucha, (Vancouver: UBC P, 2015): 267.

¹³ Max Boot argues the term 'neoconservative' has been used as an "...all-purpose term of abuse for anyone deemed to be hawkish." See Max Boot, "Neocons," *Foreign Policy*, (February 2004): 20; and Adam Chapnick and Christopher J. Kukucha, *The Harper Era in Canadian Foreign Policy: Parliament, Politics, and Canada's Global Posture*, (Vancouver: UBC P, 2016), 18.

¹⁴ Boot, "Neocons," 21.

with the tenets of neoconservatism, he never labeled himself a neoconservative. In reality, Mr. Harper's worldview defied easy labeling. This was because it weaved together several different ideological and philosophical strands. The resulting complexity led some to describe Mr. Harper's belief system as a form of 'fusionist conservatism.'¹⁵ This term acknowledged that Mr. Harper's thinking drew inspiration from a variety of intellectual schools. Nonetheless, each of these ideological strands was part of a Western liberal and democratic tradition.¹⁶

Mr. Harper was convinced that the liberal values Canadians cherish were embedded in the rules and institutions of the existing international order. He felt that the defense of these values depends upon the maintenance of a stable order.¹⁷ This perspective is not new; it has long been a part of mainstream Canadian foreign policy thinking. And yet Mr. Harper's values and understanding of the structure of world order were nonetheless different from those of his predecessors in several ways. This difference was partly ideological and partly strategic. Mr. Harper recognized that system stability depends first and foremost upon the American willingness to shoulder the mantle of system leadership. This willingness, however, increasingly depended upon the material and moral support of follower states. Mr. Harper recognized this, and suggested, "...Canadians have to be prepared to do more."¹⁸ Such support provided legitimacy to the System Leader's (hereafter SL) international agenda and helped offset the strain of leadership. From this perspective, system stability depended not only upon the SL, but SQPs like Canada as well. Followership was thus perceived to be a first order strategic imperative. Mr. Harper's pro-American vision of world order was critical, therefore, to understanding the Harper government's robust response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

¹⁵ Boessenkool and Speer, "Ordered Liberty," 2, 19.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁷ In a 2014 speech before the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Harper spoke of Canada's willingness to "...join with other civilized peoples and to challenge affronts to international order, affronts to human dignity itself, such as are today present in Eastern Europe." See Toronto Star, "Read Stephen Harper's address to the UN General Assembly," *Toronto Star*, September 25, 2014,

https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/09/25/read_stephen_harpers_address_to_the_un_general_assembly.html; and Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, "PM Delivers Remarks at a Joint Press Conference with Chancellor Merkel," (Ottawa: PMO, March 27, 2014). PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

¹⁸ Colin Robertson, "Harper's World View," *Policy Options*, (October 2011), <http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/the-new-normal-majority-government/harpers-world-view/>.

5.3 Divergent Approaches to Maintaining Order in the Post-Cold War Era

In a speech before the United Nations General Assembly in 2014, Mr. Harper declared before the assembled leaders that Canadians "...believe freedom, prosperity and peace form a virtuous cycle."¹⁹ For much of the developed world, this 'virtuous cycle' is embedded in the status quo. The overarching aim of the freedom agenda, therefore, is to defend it in places where it already exists, and expand it further as circumstances permit. A similar logic undergirded Canadian engagement with Ukraine since the Mulroney period. However, the Mulroney government's strategy of value promotion was not motivated by ideological conviction.²⁰ Rather, it was a strategic response to the emergence of transitional states like Ukraine that saw the Western system as a model for success. The Mulroney government's value promotion strategy was simply a means of integrating these states into the existing international order.

In practice, the Harper government's response to the crisis in Ukraine was comparable. However, the Harper government's strategy aimed at pursuing a wider set of objectives, including the preservation of Ukraine's gains since 1991. In 2014, Russia factored more heavily into the Canadian calculus. Aside from the difference in circumstance, there was another important difference. The Harper government possessed an ideological commitment to value promotion that the conservatives during the Mulroney period had not. The Mulroney government's efforts towards value promotion were essentially mimicry of American strategy.²¹ The Harper government, by contrast, went beyond mimicry, internalizing the American SL's mission and ideological commitment to value promotion. The Harper government's robust response to the crisis in Ukraine reflected the extent to which Canadian conservatives came to accept the SL's mission as their own. This change is the culmination of a long process of elite socialization that began during the Second World War and accelerated with the emergence of the Reform Party in 1987. It is a process that helps explain the Harper government's unambiguous foreign policies, reflecting as it did important ideological and strategic differences between Mr. Harper and his predecessors.

¹⁹ Toronto Star, "Read Stephen Harper's address to the UN General Assembly."

²⁰ Justin Massie and Stephane Roussel, Stephane, "The Twilight of Internationalism? Neocontinentalism as an Emerging Dominant Idea in Canadian Foreign Policy," in *Canada in the World: Internationalism in Canadian Foreign Policy*, ed. Heather A. Smith and Claire T. Sjolander (Don Mills: Oxford U P, 2013), 44.

²¹ For a discussion of the Mulroney government's 1991 'Good Governance' initiative, see Paul Gecelovsky and Tom Keating, "Liberal Internationalism for Conservatives: The Good Governance Initiative," in *Diplomatic Departures: The Conservative Era in Canadian Foreign Policy, 1984-93*, ed. Nelson Michaud and Kim Richard Nossal (Vancouver: UBC P, 2001), 197-205.

5.3.1 Explaining Change: From Acquiescence to Embrace

According to Ikenberry and Kupchan, follower states acquiesce to the SL's agenda when their leaders accept and internalize both its values and vision of world order. This perspective views a follower's acquiescence to the SL's agenda as a function of elite socialization.²² The degree of acquiescence reflects the extent to which domestic political elites identify with the SL's values and mission.²³ The degree of identification may change over time as elites evolve or are replaced. Such changes can accelerate in response to endogenous or exogenous developments, including domestic political crises and changes in the international order.²⁴ The way the Cold War ended enhanced both the credibility of US signaling behavior and the receptivity of elites in secondary states. According to Ikenberry et al., socialization is the process by which elites in secondary states "...internalize the norms and value orientations espoused by the hegemon and accept its normative claims about the nature of the international system."²⁵ The degree of reciprocation reflects the extent to which these elites identify with the SL and its project. As elites in Canada became more receptive to the SL's signaling behavior, they began to reciprocate with increased followership.

The process of elite socialization is important to understanding the general shape and direction of Canadian foreign policy during the Harper period. Mr. Harper, who described his government as "...extremely pro-American," strongly identified with the American SL's values and vision of world order.²⁶ This had important consequences for the shape of Canada's international engagement. These consequences were most evident in Mr. Harper's post-Maidan Ukraine policy. Here, the Harper government's embrace of the SL's agenda was unprecedentedly robust and unambiguous. Indeed, Mr. Harper wanted the United States to go further in supporting Ukraine and opposing Russia.²⁷ But what drove Mr. Harper's fervent desire for a strong Western response? There are several reasons that relate to Mr. Harper's worldview.

²² G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, "Socialization and Hegemonic Power," *International Organization* 44, no. 3 (1990): 283.

²³ *Ibid.*, 292.

²⁴ Kim Richard Nossal, Stephane Roussel and Stephane Paquin, *International Policy and Politics in Canada*, (Toronto: Pearson, 2011), 119.

²⁵ Ikenberry and Kupchan, "Socialization and Hegemonic Power," 285.

²⁶ Torstar News Service, "Stephen Harper calls for Canadian nationalism that's not anti-American," *Metronews*, November 19, 2012, <http://www.metronews.ca/news/canada/2012/11/19/stephen-harper-calls-for-canadian-nationalism-thats-not-anti-american.print.html>.

²⁷ Ibbitson, *Stephen Harper*, 335.

The Harper government's response to the crisis reflected the extent to which Mr. Harper and Canadian conservative elites more generally internalized the American vision of world order. The differences between Mr. Harper and his predecessors are both ideological and strategic. These differences result in divergent views regarding how international order can best be maintained. There is a strong tendency amongst Laurentian elites – the set of Central Canadian elites who governed Canada for most of the post-war period – to regard unchecked American power as a source of instability.²⁸ By contrast, Mr. Harper viewed the retreat of American power as a threat to system stability.²⁹ As he suggested in 2012, "...the ability of...the United States, to single-handedly shape outcomes and protect our interests has been diminishing."³⁰ In 2017, Mr. Harper expressed his concern that further US retrenchment would "...take us into a world we have not known in eight decades."³¹ The Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis was premised on this understanding of how the international order functions, rather than the multilateralist understanding embedded in the Laurentian Consensus.³² Canada's robust support for Ukraine and opposition to Russia was meant to offset the mounting strains of leadership that had already produced a degree of retrenchment during the Obama period.

The strength of the Harper government's support for the SL's post-Maidan Ukraine agenda reflects the importance that the Harper government attached to discouraging additional retrenchment. In 2003, Mr. Chretien, part of the Laurentian elite, did not seem concerned that withholding support for the American-led war in Iraq might discourage American leadership. By 2014, however, Laurentian elites were no longer managing the Canadian foreign policy decision-making process. By this point, a new set of leaders occupied the halls of power in Ottawa who did not share the traditional skepticism about the utility of American power. Nor were they simply mimicking American strategy, as the Mulroney government had. Through a process of elite socialization, the new conservative elites had accepted the SL's mission as their own.

²⁸ Daryl Bricker and John Ibbitson use the term 'Laurentian elites' to describe the set of political and cultural elites that exercised hegemonic control over Canadian politics prior to the political ascent of the Harper Conservatives in 2006. See Daryl Bricker and John Ibbitson, *The Big Shift: The Seismic Change in Canadian Politics, Business, and Culture and What It Means For Our Future*, (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2014), 2-10.

²⁹ Wells, "Why Harper wants to take on the world."

³⁰ Robertson, "Harper's World View."

³¹ FactPointVideo, "Stephen Harper: Trump will 'reverse the cornerstone of 7 decades of American foreign policy,'" Youtube video, January 19, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvOqeaVWYe4>.

³² The Laurentian multilateralist impulse is comparable to the anti-hegemonist policies pursued by Russia and France during the 1990s. Robert Kagan describes these policies as dangerous. See Robert Kagan, "The Benevolent Empire," *Foreign Policy* no. 111 (Summer 1998): 32-3.

To understand how the process of elite socialization unfolded, as well as its effects, it is necessary to consider certain changes to Canada's domestic political context. These changes neither began in 2014 nor took place all at once. The emergence of the Reform Party in 1987 energized this new thinking, which gained further traction with the end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union.

5.3.2 The Origins of Mr. Harper's Embrace of the System Leader's Agenda

Mr. Harper and others who gravitated to the Reform Party harbored disdain for certain Cold War trends in Canadian foreign policy.³³ Reform's brand of populism was informed by a sense that Canada's "...human-rights-blind foreign policy" did not reflect the full range of Canadian values.³⁴ Reformers considered the Canadian political establishment as insufficiently interested in promoting and defending Canadian values, populated as it was by Laurentian elites.³⁵ The emergence of Reform had begun a process that, within two decades, re-ordered the Canadian political landscape. The first signs of this re-ordering emerged in 1993, with the collapse of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. Unlike the vanquished Progressive Conservatives, Reformers did not subscribe to the foreign policy consensus that Laurentian elites had worked out amongst themselves.³⁶ This consensus was enmeshed in the broader 'Laurentian Consensus' described by Bricker and Ibbitson. With the collapse of the Progressive Conservatives, this consensus ceased to be multi-party in nature.

The differences did not end with foreign policy. As Bricker et al. suggest, "...Laurentian elites assume that their version of the country *is* the country, and that they run the country, just as they have always run it in the past." Bricker et al. portray Laurentian elites as an insular in-group increasingly out of touch with not only ordinary Canadians and their values, but reality as well. The Laurentian elites assume that their vision of Canada, largely premised on myths that they themselves perpetuate, is the only one with political legitimacy. They presume their values are

³³ In a 2008 speech, Mr. Harper articulated his view that "During...[the Cold War]...apologists for communism, even here in Canada, had tried to persuade us that the ideology was benign. They said we, Canada, should be neutral towards it, an honest broker because we had nothing to fear from the Soviet empire." See Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, "PRIME MINISTER HARPER'S REMARKS AT A RECEPTION IN HONOUR OF CZECH PRIME MINISTER."

³⁴ Jean Daudelin quoted in Bruce Gilley, "Middle Powers During Great Power Transitions: China's Rise and the Future of Canada-US Relations," *International Journal* 66 no. 2 (Spring 2011): 258.

³⁵ Bricker and Ibbitson, *The Big Shift*, 3; and Reform Party of Canada, "Platform & Statement of Principles," (1989), 25, https://www.poltext.org/sites/poltext.org/files/plateformes/can1989r_plt_en_12072011_125440.pdf.

³⁶ Nossal, Roussel, and Paquin, *International Policy and Politics in Canada*, 275-7.

the most authentic representation of Canadian values.³⁷ It was a view that helped foster the sort of popular resentments that initially drew Mr. Harper and others to the Reform Party and aided the rise of the new Western conservative elites who displaced the traditionalists two decades later.

The Reform Party's Western Canadian values were more closely aligned with American values than those of Laurentian elites.³⁸ Importantly, when political elites in follower states internalize the SL's values, they become more receptive to the SL's vision of world order. As Ikenberry et al. suggest, "The simultaneity of international and domestic instability creates the conditions conducive to socialization."³⁹ Events tend to play a role in changes to elite receptivity, which in turn can work to reshape the strategic preferences of FPEs. As elites become more receptive to the SL's vision, they are more likely to reciprocate with acquiescence, if not followership. If, however, elites are strongly receptive to this vision, acquiescence becomes support. This process can explain how and why some followers become 'first followers.'⁴⁰

5.3.3 Coalitional Realignment: Socialization and the New Conservative Elites

Mr. Harper was the most readily identifiable member of the new set of Western, conservative elites who governed Canada from 2006 to 2015. As G. John Ikenberry argues, "...crisis creates an environment in which elites seek alternatives to existing norms that have been discredited by events and in which new norms offer opportunities for political gains and coalitional realignment."⁴¹ Mr. Harper emerged as a key figure among those who sought an alternative to the ideological hegemony of the Laurentian elite. The new conservative elites not only acquiesced to the American SL's normative ideals – they embraced and internalized these ideals as their own. They exhibited none of the "...anti-American chippiness" that Bricker et al. associated with the Laurentian Consensus.⁴² This change is key to understanding the shape and direction of Canadian foreign policy under the Harper government.

³⁷ Bricker and Ibbitson, *The Big Shift*, 2-3.

³⁸ Christian Leuprecht suggests that Western Canadian conservatism has been influenced by the values Americans brought with them when they immigrated to the Western provinces. Leuprecht associates Reform with Canadian neoconservatism, which he suggests "...patterns itself after American conservatism." See Christian Leuprecht, "The Tory Fragment in Canada: Endangered Species?," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 36 no. 2 (2003): 409.

³⁹ Ikenberry and Kupchan, "Socialization and Hegemonic Power," 284.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 283-5; and Cooper, Higgot and Nossal, *Relocating Middle Powers*, 20-1.

⁴¹ Ikenberry and Kupchan, "Socialization and Hegemonic Power," 284.

⁴² Bricker and Ibbitson, *The Big Shift*, 14.

As Ikenberry et al. maintain, "...Elites in secondary states buy into and internalize norms that are articulated by the hegemon and therefore pursue policies consistent with the hegemon's notion of international order."⁴³ Following the Second World War, Canada had supported the construction of an American-led international order. However, latent anti-Americanism retarded the process of elite socialization and prevented Laurentian elites from fully internalizing the American SL's vision of international order.⁴⁴ Canada's support for the SL's agenda has, as a result, been tenuous for much of the post-war era. On occasion, most notably the wars in Vietnam and Iraq, Canada withheld its support altogether.⁴⁵

Mr. Harper's pro-American worldview set him apart from his predecessors. No prime minister before or since embraced the United States so openly. No other subscribed to the American vision of world order. As prime minister, Mr. Harper reshaped Canadian foreign policy in the direction of being more supportive of the US and its mission. Nowhere was this more evident than the Harper government's post-Maidan Ukraine policy. Here, Canada's followership was not tempered by Laurentian anti-Americanism. Indeed, Canadian followership during the Ukrainian crisis was unambiguous, reflecting Mr. Harper's strong pro-American worldview.⁴⁶ Rather than attempting to restrain or balance against the United States, the Harper government sought to support US leadership.⁴⁷ Judging by his consistently pro-American statements and policies, Mr. Harper maintained that it was in Canada's interests to encourage and lend robust support to the US – even if it damaged Canada-Russia relations. Indeed, the Harper government's post-Maidan Ukraine policy reflected the extent to which the new Conservative consensus came to embrace the American SL's ideological commitment to defending a liberal world order from illiberal challengers like Russia. The full extent of the Harper government's embrace of this commitment only became clear following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014, which Mr. Harper called "...a wake up call."⁴⁸

⁴³ Ikenberry and Kupchan, "Socialization and Hegemonic Power," 284.

⁴⁴ Pierre Elliot Trudeau's anti-Americanism and long-term control over the Liberal Party no doubt played a significant role in retarding this process.

⁴⁵ By contrast, Australia lent active military support to the United States in both conflicts.

⁴⁶ Mr. Harper characterized the Canada-US relationship as "...perhaps the most important issue that ever faces Canada," describing the United States as Canada's "...best ally" and "...most consistent friend." He concluded "...we forget these things at our own peril." See Paul Wells, "Living in a world without leaders," *Macleans*, June 18, 2012, <http://www.macleans.ca/uncategorized/living-in-a-world-without-leaders/>.

⁴⁷ Ibbitson, *Stephen Harper*, 325.

⁴⁸ Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, "Statement By the Prime Minister of Canada In Toronto," (Ottawa: PMO, May 30, 2014). PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

The Harper government's rhetoric in response to the crisis was more unambiguous than Canadian rhetoric had been during the preceding Laurentian period. Adam Chapnick has characterized the new conservative foreign policy thinking as unCanadian.⁴⁹ It might instead be described as 'unLaurentian' or Western Canadian. The vision of Canadian foreign policy that Mr. Harper pursued in government bore striking resemblance to the vision he laid out as the Reform Party's Chief Policy Officer in 1988; "Canada's conduct in foreign as well as domestic affairs should be guided by the values and principles of Canadians as embodied in a system of dynamic and constructive change – political democracy and economic freedom. We should uphold and promote this legacy of human rights and dignity for all humanity."⁵⁰ Here, Mr. Harper foreshadowed the direction Canadian foreign policy would take during his tenure as prime minister. Indeed, from 1988 onward the broad outlines of Mr. Harper's foreign policy thinking remained remarkably consistent.

5.3.4 Towards a Neoclassical Realist Theory of Mr. Harper's Foreign Policy

Mr. Harper saw value in working to ensure the existing rules-based international order did not give way to "...the law of the jungle."⁵¹ His disposition towards this view was informed by a moral universalism, which strengthened his appreciation for the benefits of US hegemony.⁵² According to Justin Massie and Stephane Roussel, Canadian neoconservatives share with their US counterparts an "...unqualified belief in the benefits and benevolence of US hegemony."⁵³ While Mr. Harper never identified himself as a neoconservative, he nonetheless recognized there was no viable alternative to a US-led international order. This view no doubt strengthened his resolve to support the US in its bid to contain Russia's revisionist challenge, which was rightly regarded as a serious threat to Canadian interests. This perspective was guided as much by Mr. Harper's worldview as it was his understanding of history.

The last century provided ample evidence of the dangers of changing the territorial status quo using military force. Using force, Adolf Hitler set into motion a chain of events that led

⁴⁹ Chapnick, "Peace, Order, and Good Government," 650.

⁵⁰ Reform Party of Canada, "Platform & Statement of Principles," 25.

⁵¹ Steven Chase, "Harper takes leading role in G7 against Russia," *Globe & Mail*, March 4, 2014, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/harper-takes-leading-role-in-g7-against-russia/article17727891/>.

⁵² Adam Chapnick associates moral universalism with the brand of conservatism that rose to prominence beginning in the mid-1980s. See Chapnick, "Peace, Order, and Good Government," 648.

⁵³ Massie and Roussel, "The Twilight," 41.

directly to the Second World War. From the Harper government's perspective, Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine was comparable to Nazi Germany's annexation of the Sudetenland.⁵⁴ Russia's actions represented a similarly dangerous and destabilizing revision to the European territorial status quo. The analogy was meant to highlight the significant risk of allowing an aggressor a free hand to pursue expansionist policies.⁵⁵ Given Canada's conservative interests, the Harper government's strong opposition to Russian expansionism was seen as pragmatic. Had Canada and other SQPs failed to confront Russia over its actions, this would have emboldened Vladimir Putin further just as European appeasement had encouraged Adolf Hitler.

Mr. Harper's understanding of history informed his strategic imagination. As one observer concluded, he possessed "...a much more expansive sense of what's possible than his predecessors...he's more Thatcher than Mulroney."⁵⁶ The strength of Mr. Harper's concern over the crisis in Ukraine was reflective of both his strategic thinking and preoccupation with security issues. What he saw occurring in Ukraine led him to issue a stark warning that "...all of us who desire peace and stability in the world must recognize that the consequences of these actions will be felt far beyond the borders of Ukraine or even the European continent itself."⁵⁷ Within the context of the crisis in Ukraine, Mr. Harper's strategic imagination further strengthened his already strong support for the SL and its mission.

Mr. Harper regarded the retreat of American leadership that occurred during the Obama era as a significant source of geopolitical risk. He understood that US retrenchment had already emboldened Vladimir Putin to act as he did in Ukraine.⁵⁸ Seeming to realize this, he sought to confront Russia and isolate it from the international community. Mr. Harper's moral universalism informed his willingness to pursue a more confrontational approach. It explained his disdain for the accommodating policies of engagement that Canadian governments had pursued throughout the Cold War. As Randall Schweller and William Wohlforth argue, such policies were

⁵⁴ Leslie MacKinnon, "John Baird compares Russia's actions in Ukraine to Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia," *CBC News*, March 3, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/john-baird-compares-russia-s-actions-in-ukraine-to-nazi-invasion-of-czechoslovakia-1.2558118>.

⁵⁵ Senior Harper government officials repeatedly referenced Russian expansionism as a threat.

⁵⁶ John Geddes and Paul Wells, "What you don't know about Stephen Harper: his backroom battles, diplomatic scraps, betrayals and secret insecurities. Behind the scenes of five years in power," *Macleans*, February 7, 2011, <http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/what-you-dont-know-about-stephen-harper/>.

⁵⁷ CBC, "Stephen Harper Says He'll Push For Russia's Expulsion From The G8," *CBC News*, March 22, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/stephen-harper-says-he-ll-push-for-russia-s-expulsion-from-the-g8-1.2583034>.

⁵⁸ FactPointVideo, "Stephen Harper."; and Ibbitson, *Stephen Harper*, 333.

appeasement by another name.⁵⁹ Mr. Harper viewed such policies as not only naïve and immoral – but dangerous. The horrors of the Second World War, he stated, “...could have been avoided” had it not been for those who “...deliberately turned a blind eye” to the rising threat from Nazi Germany.⁶⁰ The Harper government’s ‘principled stand’ against Russian aggression reflected the prime minister’s contempt for those who responded to evil with moral ambiguity or equivocation. When Mr. Harper’s supporters spoke of his moral clarity, they referred to his capacity to differentiate between good and evil and his willingness to confront it. They regarded his willingness to speak to this difference as evidence of his moral clarity – all the more necessary in a time of uncertainty.⁶¹

5.3.5 Mr. Harper’s Corrective: Morality and Canadian Foreign Policy

Mr. Harper’s moral universalism caused him to be suspicious of the moral relativism that he associated with the political Left.⁶² Moral leadership requires doing what was necessary to ensure that the side of good prevailed. From this perspective, the amoral realism and anti-Americanism that defined Canadian foreign policy for much of the Laurentian period undermined Canada’s moral leadership.⁶³ Canada had an obligation to side strongly with and support those who shared Canada’s values. This implied not only an obligation to support the US, but to support as well transitional SQPs that were willing and able to add to the SQC’s preponderance in defence of those shared values.⁶⁴ Ukraine’s tremendous resources and pro-West aspirations placed the state squarely within this category.

In a 2014 speech, Mr. Harper spoke of “...Canada’s proud history of defending freedom abroad,” while noting that “...Canada has not always lived up to these high aspirations.” He lamented that “There have been time when we’ve fallen short, heeded the calls of those who preferred to see Canada sidelined, to see Canada serve as a neutral bystander instead of a

⁵⁹ Randall L. Schweller and William C. Wohlforth, “Power Test: Evaluating Realism in Response to the End of the Cold War,” *Security Studies* 9, no. 3 (March 2000): 81.

⁶⁰ Global News, “Transcript: Episode 40, June 8,” *Global News*, June 8, 2014, <http://globalnews.ca/news/1381283/transcript-episode-40-june-8/>.

⁶¹ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development, “Address by Minister Baird to the NATO Council of Canada Conference – Ukraine: The Future of International Norms,” (Ottawa: DFATD, November 18, 2014). PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

⁶² Boessenkool and Speer, “Ordered Liberty.”

⁶³ Gilley, “Middle powers during great power transitions,” 264.

⁶⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, “Canada-Ukraine Relations,” (Ottawa, DFATD, January 2015). PCUH Archives, Canada-Ukraine Project.

principled actor.” Past governments, Mr. Harper explained, “...preached moral-equivalency,” “...showed blindness to the unparalleled crimes of Maoism,” and demonstrated “...indifference in the face of the communist coup against Poland’s Solidarity in 1981.” His government’s foreign policies, by contrast, took into account “...Canadian examples and experiences – both proud and shameful.” Mr. Harper described his government’s foreign policies as “...informed by...[Canada’s]...highest values.” Key among these values, from his perspective, was freedom. This value, Mr. Harper suggested, was “...at the heart of what it means to be Canadian.” The Canadian people, according to the prime minister, possessed a “...desire to do what is right and good.” For these reasons, he explained, “Canada stands proudly, resolutely, and unequivocally with the people of Ukraine.”⁶⁵ For Mr. Harper, Canada’s support for Ukraine was not simply a strategic imperative – it was a moral imperative.⁶⁶

The Harper government’s Ukraine policy reflected the prime minister’s moral certitude, which contributed to his strong determination to ensure that Canada positioned itself on the right side of history. The strength of this determination was further demonstrated when Mr. Harper confronted Vladimir Putin at the 2014 G-20 summit in Brisbane, Australia. In a brief face-to-face encounter, Mr. Harper told the Russian president “I guess I’ll shake your hand, but I have only one thing to say to you: You need to get out of Ukraine.”⁶⁷ These remarks, which garnered significant international press coverage, neatly encapsulated Mr. Harper’s unwavering commitment to supporting Ukrainian sovereignty and independence, and his willingness to confront Vladimir Putin over Russia’s aggression towards Ukraine.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, “Statement By The Prime Minister of Canada In Toronto.”

⁶⁶ As John Ibbitson’s suggests, “There has never been a prime minister as utterly contemptuous of people outside his voting coalition as Stephen Harper.” While it is not altogether clear that Mr. Harper felt contempt towards ordinary voters who disagreed with him, there is significant evidence that Mr. Harper held his Liberal predecessors in very low esteem. His contempt towards them was no doubt related to his oft-stated view that past governments had failed to respond to certain moral imperatives. Such an open disdain for the politics and policies of his predecessors has not been the norm in Canadian politics. Mr. Harper was, in this regard, quite unlike his predecessors. For a useful discussion of Mr. Harper’s relationship with his political opponents, see Ibbitson, *Stephen Harper*, especially p. 308-14.

⁶⁷ Associated Press, “Putin gets cool G-20 welcome over Ukraine conflict,” *Washington Post*, November 15, 2014. http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/eu-leaders-to-discuss-ukraine-with-obama-at-g-20/2014/11/14/ed940fec-6c5c-11e4-bafd-6598192a448d_story.html

⁶⁸ Ben Doherty, “G20: Canadian prime minister shirtfronts Vladimir Putin Instead,” *The Guardian*, November 15, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/15/g20-canadian-prime-minister-shirtfronts-vladimir-putin-instead>; and Jason Scott and Ilya Arkhipov, “Harper Uses Handshake to Tell Putin to ‘Get out of Ukraine’,” *Bloomberg*, November 15, 2014, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-11-15/harper-uses-handshake-to-tell-putin-he-must-get-out-of-ukraine->; and Fox News, “Canadian PM to Putin: ‘Get out of Ukraine’,” *Fox News*, November 15, 2014, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2014/11/15/canadian-pm-to-putin-get-out-ukraine.html>; and

5.4 Conclusion

A combination of individual- and unit-level variables injected vigor into the Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis. Mr. Harper's worldview and individual agency played a key role in pushing Canadian foreign policy in a new, more ideologically driven direction. This new direction reflected the values and foreign policy thinking of a new set of conservative elites. The Harper government's confrontational response to the Ukrainian crisis marked a dramatic shift in the substance of Canadian foreign policy. Ideas, elite socialization, and individual agency all played an important role in making this change possible. Amidst the most serious crisis of the post-Cold War era, there was plenty of room for Laurentian-style constraint. Instead, the Harper government pursued a vigorous and distinctly 'unLaurentian' policy. It did so for both ideological and strategic reasons. The Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis was neither quiet nor constrained, epitomizing the 'unLaurentian' thinking that defined the Harper era in Canadian foreign policy.

BBC News, "Ukraine Crisis: Russia under pressure at G20 summit," *BBC News*, November 15, 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-australia-30067612>.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This case study looks to explain the Harper government's response to the Ukraine crisis with reference to variables at the system-, unit- and individual-levels of analysis. It draws upon Power Transition Theory (hereafter PTT) and aspects of Liberal Internationalist theory to put forward an explanation that considers the dynamics of a changing world order, domestic political culture, and the beliefs and individual agency of foreign policy decision makers. PTT offers valuable insights into how changes at the system-level unfold, as well as the reasons why such changes occur. Theorist John Ikenberry's concept of elite socialization explains how changes in domestic political culture can influence the shape and direction of a state's foreign policies. In tandem, these theories and concepts are useful in assessing interrelated and simultaneous changes both within individual states and the international order. Moreover, these are useful in explaining the relationship between such changes. A combination of PTT and Ikenberry's concept of elite socialization is thus particularly well suited to explaining the shape and direction of Canadian foreign policy that occurred within the context of a rapidly changing international order.

6.2 Harper's Post-Maidan Policy and Three Levels of Analysis: An Assessment

The Harper government's situational response to the crisis was predominantly shaped by incentives and constraints at the system level. A combination of American retrenchment and Russia's revisionist aggression provided a clear and ominous signal of declining system stability. While the former provided Canada with a strong incentive to lend robust support to the international agenda of the US as System Leader, it was the Ukrainian crisis that highlighted the urgency of this imperative. This 'exogenous shock' provided strong evidence of the need to vigorously attend to followership imperatives with more urgency. What followed from this was the Harper government's wholesale adoption of the American definition of the security dilemma and an unprecedented degree of Canadian support for Ukraine. On both counts, ideology predisposed the Harper government towards these positions. The government's capacity to recognize these system-level imperatives, and its willingness to respond to them, reflect the determinative role played by variables at the unit- and individual- levels of analysis.

Variables at all three levels of analysis shaped the Harper government's perception of system-level imperatives. The urgency and robustness of the Canadian position resulted, in part, from a lack of strong unit-level constraints and a Conservative majority mandate. The opposition parties largely acquiesced to the government's policies, reflecting the extraordinary degree of public support for Ukraine. Opposition by other interests to the government's position was negligible, reflecting, in part, the lack of extensive commercial ties between Canada and Russia. In Germany, where commercial ties with Russia are much more robust, pro-Russian sentiments are much more prevalent. Canada's lack of strong commercial ties with Russia reduced both the political and economic costs of pursuing a highly confrontational response. These circumstances afforded Mr. Harper an opportunity to respond to the situation largely as he pleased. This freedom of action would highlight the importance of Mr. Harper's individual agency as a foreign policy maker.

While the Harper government's strong support for Ukraine had potential political benefits, partisan politics were of secondary concern given the severity of the crisis. Besides, unit-level political incentives in this case aligned with system-level imperatives. For this reason, the determinative weight of partisan political incentives should not be overestimated. This conclusion becomes clear upon consideration of other variables at the system- and individual level of analysis. Variables at these levels played a more significant role in shaping the Harper government's threat assessments and policy preferences than did variables at the unit-level of analysis.

Mr. Harper's ideologically charged brand of moral universalism conditioned both his view of the situation and his strategic preferences. From Mr. Harper's perspective, it was in Canada's interests to lend its robust support to the US-led coalition's pro-Ukrainian agenda, which was, in his view, necessary for the purposes of system defence. The strength of this support reflects the extent to which Mr. Harper and other new Conservative elites shared the American US's ideological commitment to preserving the status quo arrangement of the existing liberal world order. Their internalization of this commitment reflected the degree to which they had been socialized into the SL's value-system. Indeed, unLaurentian elites and Mr. Harper in particular came to share the American vision of world order. For ideological as well as pragmatic reasons, the Harper government was inclined towards adopting the American definition of the security dilemma.

By invading Ukraine, Vladimir Putin Russia turned Ukraine into a key venue in the competition between conservative and revisionist visions of world order. For Mr. Harper, Russia's revisionist challenge represented not only a threat to the existing order, but also the values that are embedded in its rule and institutions. Ukraine's struggle for freedom and democracy was enmeshed within the wider competition between two very different visions of world order. Ukraine's pro-West aspirations and growing identification with Western values increased Mr. Harper's enthusiasm for lending Canada's support to the US's pro-Ukraine agenda. His unambiguous support for this effort reflected the foreign policy thought associated with the unLaurentian consensus. Here, too, Mr. Harper was central, having played a major role as an architect of Canadian foreign policy in the emergence of this new, more conservative consensus.

In the end, variables at the system- and individual- level of analysis had, on balance, the most determinative weight. The Harper government was reacting after all to an exogenous shock that brought strong system-level incentives towards action into clear focus. As an architect of Canada's foreign policy, it was Mr. Harper's threat assessments, policy preferences and individual agency that determined the shape and direction of Canada's response to the Ukrainian crisis. The determinative weight of variables located at the individual-level of analysis, namely Mr. Harper's ideology, was increased by the lack of strong unit-level constraints. In the immediate sense, unit-level variables played a much less important role than those residing at the system- and individual-levels of analysis.

6.3 Conclusion

The Harper government's response to the Ukrainian crisis represented an important shift in the shape and direction of Canadian foreign policy. This shift was the culmination of several short- and long-term changes at the system- and unit- levels. Post-Cold War changes to the structure of the international order and the strategic preferences of Conservative elites together produced a set of conditions that were favourable to change. The unprecedented Ukrainian crisis came as 'exogenous shock.' This shock provided the final ingredient needed to unleash a rapid and forceful reorientation of Canadian foreign policy. During the last two years of the Harper era, the pace of change accelerated at a dizzying rate, mirroring the pace of change that occurred the world over.

List of Abbreviations

FPE – Foreign Policy Executive

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NCR – Neoclassical Realism

OSCE – Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

PTT – Power Transition Theory

RP – Revisionist Power

SL – System Leader

SQC – Status Quo Coalition

SQP – Status Quo Power

US – United States

Appendix: The Tenures of Recent Canadian Prime Ministers

Pierre Trudeau (Liberal).....	1968-1979
Joe Clark (Progressive Conservative).....	1979-1980
Pierre Trudeau (Liberal).....	1980-1984
Brian Mulroney (Progressive Conservative)...	1984-1993
Kim Campbell (Progressive Conservative)....	1993-1993
Jean Chretien (Liberal).....	1993-2003
Paul Martin (Liberal).....	2003-2006
Stephen Harper (Conservative).....	2006-2015
Justin Trudeau (Liberal).....	2015-

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